

**Exploring how hospitality artisans operationalise  
sustainability: “How do they do it?”**

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## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

Date 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to four wise men. First, my husband Dame who has loved me since I was 11 and continues to help, challenge and support me. Thank you. You encouraged me along the way and took up the slack when I was completely preoccupied and immersed in my study. Secondly, our sons Jacob, Sam and Billy because I want my grandchildren, their grandchildren, and their grandchildren ... to see, taste, hear and enjoy the world as we do today. That is why I started on this journey.

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## **ETHICS APPROVAL**

Ethics approval was awarded on 9 June, 2015 from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee. The ethics application reference number is 15/204.

## ABSTRACT

Throughout history, artisans have influenced societal, economic and political change (Cant, 2015; Hansen, 2009; Kristofferson, 2007; Morris, 2009; Pappano & Rice, 2013; Rock, 1998). Given the current global concern surrounding sustainability, and the resurgence of artisan production, this research looks to the hospitality artisan as a contemporary version of their historic namesake. It is hoped knowledge thus acquired will aid stakeholders and future hospitality operators in their quest for sustainability-focused change.

Sustainability in hospitality is a growing area of interest for researchers. However, the transfer of theory into practice remains a problem for both industry and academia (Buckley, 2012). Much debate exists in scholarly literature about where sustainability solutions may exist to progress uptake in the industry. Exploring sustainability in practical environments, through the perspective of individuals, has been recommended for future research by some academics (Buckley, 2012; Jones, Hillier & Comfort, 2016; Willard, 2012). Recently Lim (2016) conceptualised an overlapping sustainability and creativity model as a mode of advancing sustainability stewardship in the hospitality industry. Lim's (2016) accompanying discussion centres on the value that exists when hospitality actors creatively find solutions, overcome challenges and, take opportunities that produce pro-sustainability outcomes outside in-the-box thinking.

With creativity in mind, a review of previous literature acknowledges that operators of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs share common opportunist, risk and creative destruction characteristics (Schaper & Volery, 2004; Schumpeter, 2003). SMEs have important roles to play in sustainability uptake according to some academics (Deucher, 2012; Lawrence, Collins, Pavlovich, & Arunachalam, 2006; Schaper, 2002). Similarly, entrepreneurs have been identified as valuable research subjects for sustainability-focused knowledge and positive change (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Hall, Daneke, Lenox, 2010; Parrish, 2010). Complementing this link, historic accounts posit artisans as entrepreneurial disrupters of the status quo, challengers of social problems and key actors who positively impact the well-being of society (British Library Board, 1841; Howell, 1996; Lucie-Smith, 1981). Given the world's global

concern with sustainability, artisans may be the future bottom-up disrupters of change. Therefore, the intersection of sustainability, SMEs, entrepreneurs and hospitality artisans provided a pertinent research nexus to explore how sustainability is operationalised, thereby contributing to knowledge that helps solve the problem of putting theory into practice.

The aim of the research was to explore how hospitality owner/managers operationalise sustainability through their unique perspectives as contemporary artisans. The research addressed the important question: “How do artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?” or essentially, “how do they do it?” The experiences and perspectives of the artisan participants were investigated using an interpretivist paradigm, qualitative methods and thematic analysis.

The research findings show that all eight New Zealand hospitality artisan participants demonstrated high levels of perseverance, innovation and like-minded network building when faced with obstacles specific to their sustainable business model. The future of hospitality lies in an operator’s ability to understand, generate, and embed a mindset in the business that insists on environmental stewardship, social well-being and economic success. The findings revealed the potency of the artisans, small-producers, movers, shakers, radical thinkers and ultimately, concerned individuals as the fuel that can disrupt the current traditional business model. The starting point on a hospitality operators’ sustainable journey has recently been suggested as a research area that little is known about according to Font, Garay, and Jones (2016). The artisans’ sustainability consciousness is significant and illustrated as a critical starting point on the sustainable journey using the Golden Circle perspective (see Chapter 5). The lack of sustainability is a threat to our common future and there is a need to explore every avenue where positive change is sought. The participants, as artisans in this research, are disrupting the status quo. Appropriately, an artisan gets the first word:

If you want to create a dynamic food supply you need to encourage its small, artisan producers which are on the cutting edge that influence the major cultural values of a country. It’s not the Goodman Fielders and frozen Watties peas and corn that make a country like France great. It’s individual farmers doing wonderful products that people go away and think of for the rest of their lives (Pat).

# Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to an overview of the research and the focus of enquiry. The aim of the study is then discussed alongside the business intention behind the research aim. The research is then put into a New Zealand context. A brief overview of the methodology follows and the thesis chapters are outlined.

## 1.1 Research Overview

The historic sustainability declaration which emerged from the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment asserted fundamental goals concerning the social, environmental and economic well-being for present and future generations (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment [UNCHE], 1972).

Increasingly, sustainability is important for business (Ernst & Young, 2011; Ethical Corporation, 2015; Willard, 2012). The hospitality industry is no exception given its high resource consumption rates and massive waste production (Melissen, 2013).

However, a recent article by Jones *et al.* (2016) suggested that hospitality businesses continue to remain focused on economic outcomes.

Tourism and hospitality research has identified industry-specific reasoning for the inclusion of sustainability goals in business practice, and there is an inference that this may increasingly become the business norm. Jones *et al.* (2016) recently observed that sustainability research has predominantly focused on large hotels, yet small-medium enterprises (SMEs) represent the dominant proportion of the hospitality industry (Davidson, McPhail, & Barry, 2011; Deale, Nichols, & Jacques, 2009; Deucher, 2012). More research is needed into this sector that makes up the largest proportion of the hospitality industry; SMEs are part of that sector and central to this study. This research was conducted in New Zealand where more than 95% of businesses are SMEs (Corner, 2001; Lawrence *et al.*, 2006; Singh, 2013) and the nation's brand '100% Pure' (Morrow, 2013), by definition demands delivery of a tourism product that honours that trademark.

Currently however, operationalising sustainable initiatives in the hospitality industry largely remains a business choice. However, it appears the pressure for change will

continue to increase for hospitality enterprises to commit to sustainability ideals. Hospitality, as part of the larger tourism product, must consider its reliance and impact across the social, environmental and economic dimensions irrespective of enterprise size, as collectively the entire industry is culpable. Therefore, sustainability knowledge investigated at SME level must be considered equally as important to research and as a micro-scale vantage to explore practical industry solutions.

Some academics have suggested there are problems aligning theory and practice (Buckley, 2012; Sharpley, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009). For instance, Tyrrell, Paris, and Biaett (2012) noted the high industry demand for practical solutions to facilitate sustainability in operation. Buckley (2012) acknowledged that an individual's experiences of sustainability operationalisation alongside their reactions and values have been overlooked in the research literature. Yet individuals have been recommended as probable knowledge repositories to help bridge the gap between theory and practice (Buckley, 2012). So, investigating how SME owners or managers in hospitality operationalise sustainability in their business may provide some understanding from an impacted operator's perspective.

### **1.1.1 Developing the Focus of the Inquiry**

A review of the literature demonstrates the importance of sustainability and the need for uptake and change. Individuals, and particularly entrepreneurs, were noted in the literature as promising avenues for both research and sustainability uptake. For example, exploring how entrepreneurs navigate their SME in relation to societal changes offers a potentially knowledge-rich research area according to some academics (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Walley & Taylor, 2002). Notably, research has identified artisans as change-makers, bringing political and societal change to era-specific problems. Indeed, if artisans of old responded to the problems of their time and shaped their countries' histories, maybe today's artisan can do the same. Sustainability is an important and contemporary global issue. Therefore, investigating how modern-day artisans perceive, act and respond to this contemporary problem may provide unexplored pathways to understanding. It is hoped that the lived experiences of artisan owners and managers of sustainability-centric hospitality SMEs offer a unique layer of

probable change-making understanding that could add to the body of knowledge and contribute positive change.

### **1.1.2 The Aim of this Research**

My interest in exploring sustainability practice in hospitality artisan SMEs is the result of my history in hospitality and business, and the difficulties I experienced in creating a sustainability-centric hospitality business model. I have had a number of insightful roles in the hospitality industry: I have been a chef practitioner and teacher; I have commissioned large kitchens, sourced and supplied hospitality equipment, set up large and small hospitality kitchens, and negotiated payment from hospitality debtors. I have witnessed many respected hospitality practitioners fail. Hospitality is a hard business with high failure rates (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006). It demands an exhausting level of commitment, creative passion, high customer service delivery and long hours. These experiences were the catalyst for change, so 16 years ago my husband and I started a Monday to Friday business outside of hospitality with head office billing, minimum debt risk, and almost no customer contact. Owning a non-hospitality business further highlighted the time-poor, stressful and financially challenging business dimensions of successful hospitality ownership. However, we were keen to return to hospitality ownership with a sustainability focus and began the process of business strategising. The struggle to balance the ideals of sustainability with the probability of operational success in a hospitality environment proved a conundrum and hence became the focus of interest for this study.

Specifically, I wondered if the difficulty of transferring theory into practice was not only a barrier for sustainable uptake but also evidence of the concerns expressed by other stakeholders. I further wondered what type of person possessed such a level of commitment beyond traditional business strategy and could operationalise sustainability objectives. It seemed logical to go to the source and ask those involved how they did it. Hence, the aim of my research became “How do artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?”

### 1.1.3 The Context of the Research

SMEs offer a micro-scale, simple (Wilbanks, 2002), and tractable (Wilbanks & Kates, 1999) environment to conduct exploratory research and potentially find new knowledge. Alonso and O'Neill (2010) promoted micro-scale research for enhancing hospitality knowledge and, similarly, Wilbanks and Kates (1999) and Wilbanks (2003) suggested unravelling sustainability-related issues using a micro-scale lens. It is acknowledged that hospitality SMEs are a dominant business cluster, a less studied research site and, according to Singh (2013), representative of a large portion of New Zealand businesses.

In New Zealand, many SME owners struggle to understand the depth of their social and environmental impacts, have fewer recycling programmes, and report and train less on sustainable practice than those in large firms (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006). A gap exists in the New Zealand context where Hoskin (2011) has shown research on green initiatives is sparse and the drivers and barriers to sustainable uptake by SMEs is an area ripe for research. Private business enterprises in New Zealand are abundant, with SMEs representing 97 percent (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006) or 98 percent of the country's businesses (Corner, 2001; Singh, 2013). New Zealand's SMEs have no standard definition but are an important part of New Zealand hospitality as part of tourism (Deucher, 2012). The New Zealand tourism campaign '100% Pure' is a national eco-branding (Brodie & Sharma, 2011; Morrow, 2013) and, for the sake of congruence, this SME-dense country needs to embrace sustainable action, specifically in the hospitality industry, in support of the greater tourism product. The correlation between a country's unique resources and stewardship, the national tourism product branding, and the fundamental role operators have in a country's well-being and success, was recently acknowledged by Croce and Perri (2017). Accordingly, and consistent with New Zealand's tourism eco-message, hospitality SMEs will increasingly be expected to live up to the '100% Pure' brand and move towards a more sustainability-focused business model.

The importance of tourism is widely recognised as a growth factor and in some countries, according to Croce and Perri (2017), tourism is the most significant industry. For example, US\$1,232 billion was injected into world economies through tourism in 2015 (World Tourism Organisation [WTO], 2016). Worldwide, tourism provides one in eleven jobs and represents 10 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP); food,

beverage and accommodation come under the tourism banner (WTO, 2016) and the industry continues to grow (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2010; Statistics New Zealand [SNZ], 2015; WTO, 2016).

Similarly, in New Zealand, then Prime Minister John Key announced the 2013 government budget acknowledging the importance of tourism and committed NZ\$158 million to sector growth to be spent over four years (Key, 2013). In the year ending 31 March 2015, 168,012 or 6.9 percent of workers in New Zealand were employed in tourism, contributing 4.9 percent to GDP with a spend of NZ\$29.8 billion into the local economy, often from offshore (SNZ, 2015). The Statistics New Zealand (2015) tourism satellite account operates under the United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] (2015) framework and for the year ending 31 March 2015 identified favourable results. The tourism spend was up 10.3 percent on the previous year to NZ\$29.8 billion, with international tourism monies increasing 17.1 percent to NZ\$11.8 billion and the domestic tourism spend rising 6.3 percent to NZ\$18.6 billion (SNZ, 2015). Statistics New Zealand (2015) further identified NZ\$2,389 million was spent on accommodation, while food and beverage spending increased 12.9 percent (NZ\$369 million) to NZ\$3,233 million, demonstrating the value of tourism to New Zealand.

Extracting the hospitality contribution from the statistics is difficult. However, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE, 2015) identified 144,440 employees and 19,353 businesses in accommodation and food service at year end in 2015 (MBIE, 2015). The hospitality industry represents a large part of SMEs in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2010), and hospitality entrepreneurship in New Zealand is extraordinarily challenging (Andringa, Poulston & Pernecky, 2016). Hospitality, as part of the tourism industry in New Zealand, represents an important industry that offers work, contributes to the economy and continues to grow. These factors make research into the industry very significant.

## **1.2 The Methodological Journey**

An interpretivist paradigm was well suited to meet the aim of the research. Purposive sampling was used to recruit eight artisan owner/managers of sustainability-centric hospitality businesses. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the participants'

SMEs. The artisans all produced at least one handcrafted food or beverage product and were recognised through regulatory bodies or industry for their sustainability-focused business model. The SMEs were located across the North and South Islands of New Zealand; three were in a city and five were in rural areas.

Face to face interviews created an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of the artisans and ask them how they navigated a business model outside of current convention. While interpretivism is subjective and cannot be deemed conclusive (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) it does help explain human and social reality (Crotty, 1998) and therefore understand “how artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME.”

### **1.3 Chapter Outline**

This thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter 1 highlights the research gap in academic literature and a practical context, while identifying the origins of the research aim. The artisan perspective offers a potentially valuable view and an unexplored lens in hospitality research, and specifically to understanding, “How artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME” or essentially, “how they do it.”

The second chapter considers the importance of sustainability as a global concern and specifically to the hospitality industry. This chapter identifies the resource pressure on the industry, the industry response to that pressure, and an operational model reflecting that pressure. The key stakeholders enabling or hindering sustainability uptake in hospitality are discussed as core actors within the sphere of influence.

Chapter 3 discusses the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology used in this research. The chapter justifies the methods used as the best instruments for exploring the experiences and perspectives of the participants. It also discusses sampling procedures, the method of data analysis and limitations to the research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. Four key themes are revealed and provide insight into the change-making attributes of the hospitality artisan and how they operationalise sustainability in their SME, essentially answering the research question.

Chapter 5 employs Sinek's (2009) Golden Circle perspective as a rationale used to explain recognisable disruptions in history. The Golden Circle helps to illustrate the significance of the artisans' sustainability consciousness as a critical starting point on the sustainability journey. Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis and discusses the ideas and meanings generated from this research along with suggestions for future research directions.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

Sustainability is considered an important issue for the united global community (Jones *et al.*, 2016) and is increasingly significant in business (Ernst & Young, 2011; Ethical Corporation, 2015; Willard, 2012). As indicated in Chapter 1, hospitality represents one of the world's largest industries (Baum, 2006; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deale *et al.*, 2009; Mayo, 1997; Sharpley, 2009). Given the industry's high resource consumption rates and waste production (Melissen, 2013) environmental, societal and economic responsibility must be considered (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Sharpley, 2000; Yepes, 2015).

The hospitality and tourism literature suggests practical knowledge may be helpful in facilitating sustainable industry uptake (Buckley, 2012; Sharpley, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009). Individuals' experiences of sustainability operationalisation along with their reactions and values are areas which have been simultaneously overlooked and recommended as knowledge pools to help bridge the gap between theory and practice (Buckley, 2012). As such, the important question "How do owners and managers operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?" or essentially, "how do they do it?" remains unanswered and is the focus of this research.

This chapter reviews the literature on sustainability; its origins, definitions and global importance are discussed alongside motivations for uptake and progress. Environmental stewardship, economic health and social concern are introduced as the three pillars of sustainability and the long-sighted lens necessary for a value-laden business model. The hospitality industry is introduced as an important global industry that is new to the research process and whose literature is still quite lean compared to other social sciences (Myung, McClaren & Li, 2012).

The next section offers an insight into sustainability in hospitality and includes the drivers for uptake and the predominant response areas. Large-hotel research dominates the literature and examples of this are included throughout the review. These examples, together with an operational model, characterise the most common areas of response. The operationalisation model is offered and discussed, highlighting the gap between what the industry is doing and what is necessary across the three pillars of

sustainability. The stakeholders within the sphere of influence are then discussed in the next section.

In the final section of this chapter, SMEs are examined as well as their dominating presence in the hospitality industry. SMEs are then linked to entrepreneurs and artisans of old, and a new look at value currency is proposed. SMEs, sustainability entrepreneurs and artisans-of-old provide the nexus where innovation and bottom-up change are reported in the literature and are the three areas of interest at the centre of this research.

## **2.1 Sustainability**

Tracing the development of sustainability and the increased attention on it, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE, 1972) is a marked starting-point for sustainability discourse and objectives around making the planet a fit place for future generations. The declaration advocates a common outlook, with common principles to inspire, guide and shape the global population in order to preserve and enhance a better world for current and future generations. The UNCHE mandate warns:

To defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal to be pursued together with, and in harmony with, the established and fundamental goals of peace and of world-wide economic and social development (UNCHE, 1972, p. 3).

The Brundtland Report, presented by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987, p. 54), conceptualised sustainability in more detail and defined sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Despite this well-cited report, there are many other definitions; some share a common theme, others contest and differ. Most importantly, the practice of sustainability requires a focused intention toward equal prioritisation of three value pillars: social, environmental and economic (Dwyer, Jago, Deery, & Fredline, 2007; Elkington, 1999; Faux, 2005; Robert & Cohen, 2002; Sloan, Legrand, Tooman, & Fendt, 2009; Willard, 2012) and must be considered intergenerationally (Deloitte, 2010; Hall *et al.*, 2010,

Jones *et al.*, 2016; Stubbings, 2009). It is argued that one pillar need not be relinquished to support another (Barbier, 1987; Hawken *et al.*, 1999; Roberts & Cohen, 2002). The literature acknowledges that sustainability is ambiguous and hard to define (Barbier, 1987; Deloitte, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Withiam, 2011), and that it is a fashionable word and often the tag line on many products and services (Parker, 2011; Roberts & Cohen, 2002). Ehrenfeld (2008, p. 9) captured and defined it simply as, “the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever.”

Indeed the 1972 UNCHE directive proposes care across sustainability’s three pillars (i.e., economic, social and environmental). However, according to Jones *et al.* (2016), there is no agreed and universal definition of sustainability. The global impetus for sustainability is strong, arising from environmental, economic and social harm as a consequence of non-action (Buckley, 2012; Faux, 2005; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Hart, 1997). Stubbings (2009) claimed that humans have short-sighted thinking embedded in their DNA; their vision, action and impact is not geographically, temporally or multi-generationally considered. The next section overviews sustainability in business.

### **2.1.1 Sustainability in Business**

Philosophically, the aim of sustainability is to move awareness from a capitalist-fuelled profit focus to a softer, value-laden society, a society that explores the true cost of business (Elkington, 1999; Faux, 2005). This means business must transition from an old, dysfunctional model of economics to one that operates harmoniously with the environment by reducing global climate disruption and preserving resource capital (Willard, 2012). Sustainability also demands an investment in social capital by engendering trust through considering gender, cultural and moral equality, enhancing community relations, education and training, product safety and a whole range of initiatives aimed at social parity (Elkington, 1999).

The three-dimensional currencies of financial, social and environmental capital – often referred to as the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1999) – are hard to measure (Barbier, 1987; Faux, 2005; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Withiam, 2011). Their application is usually voluntary (Faux, 2005) and, as Elkington (1999) identified, the short-sighted nature of an accountant’s financially focused training and work limits triple-line thinking. In

2011, to help businesses adapt to a triple-bottom-line mindset and auditing system, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development published its *Guide to Corporate Ecosystem Valuation*. However, discourse and laws that guide sustainable actions remain soft; words like *best practice* continue to add to the language that impedes legislation and control (Siorak, Meier, Buri, & Cornuz, 2015).

Public pressure remains low according to Buckley (2012) and this begs the question as to what motivates individuals and business operators to choose a sustainable business model? According to Tzschentke, Kirk, and Lynch (2008), their ‘path to greenness’ study found three types of respondents: those with an evolving consciousness and action orientated; a smaller group claiming to have always known and lived a green life; and those who are cost and savings driven. In a business context, sustainability can add value to all three pillars (Roberts & Cohen, 2002): that is, reduce costs (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Pantelidis, Geerts, & Acheampong, 2010), create competitive advantage (Boley & Uysal, 2013; Sloan, Legrand, & Chen, 2013; Thompson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2010; Tyrrell *et al.*, 2012; Willard, 2012), and offer unexpected benefits (Boley & Uysal, 2013). Indeed, there has been much study into an array of sustainability subjects to motivate owners towards a revised business model.

In practice, there is mounting evidence to provoke business owners and managers into considering sustainability initiatives in their operations. Willard (2012, p. 18) offered this ideal: “The business case for sustaining the planet is stronger than the business case for trashing it.” Enterprises have reacted and taken on business jargon like ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘social and corporate responsibility’, ‘certified green’ and ‘sustainability’ (Parker, 2011) but some question the motive. Roberts and Cohen (2002) dismissed any genuine intent and suggested the term ‘sustainable development’ is thrown about with boutique glitz and a lack of understanding. Whilst sustainability can be employed by self-serving businesses as a greenwashing camouflage (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2009) to arouse feel-good customer buy-in, Elkington (1999) suggested a sustainability approach must be strategised with more long-term thinking. Many threaten that business practices that exploit environmental and social capital will fail, the ‘tipping point’ looms and non-response threatens future humankind (Buckley,

2012; Deloitte, 2010; Elkington, 1999; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2013; Willard, 2012).

Some research claims that the world's increasing transparency creates a global-lens to deter behaviours that may be considered counter-sustainable (Brown & Butcher, 2005; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deloitte, 2010; Dwyer & Faux, 2010; Elkington, 1999; Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Stoddard, Pollard, & Evans, 2012) and, in turn, provoke uptake. In his 1999 study, Elkington stated that the transparency revolution can collapse traditional authority and bring together new population clusters that share common values. They can rank businesses using information on the Internet and bring about change. Yet, the extent of this change remains unconsidered and business response is mixed, including those businesses that believe they will be unaffected by pro-sustainability pressure (Faux, 2005).

Encouraging human and business response to sustainability has been the focus of numerous academic scholars over many decades. Elkington (1999, p. 19) has claimed, "The world is going to be prepared to pay people who can help it survive." Deale *et al.* (2009) and Deloitte (2010) predicted that discussion has run its course that time is a luxury that has gone and that many agree the world needs sustainability action. Others say business practices need to be transformed, and people need to recalibrate their business thinking (Buckley, 2012; Deloitte, 2010; Faux, 2005; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). Sustainability has both its critics and its advocates; however, as a business model, it has some researched advantages but, most significantly, credible agencies are noting the increased importance of sustainability.

For example, Deloitte (2010, p. 42) advised future businesses that, "Sustainability will become the business norm and increasingly be seen as part of a license to operate." Notably, Ernst & Young's global report (2011) marked the sustainability phenomenon and confirmed 'social acceptance risk and corporate social responsibility' as one of the top 10 risks for businesses. This rank implies increased stakeholder concern for sustainability-related demands (Willard, 2012). This response from a business commentator supports the numerous claims from academics that sustainability is increasingly important (Alonso & O'Neill, 2010; Buckley, 2012; Deloitte, 2010;

Elkington, 1999; Ethical Corporation, 2015; Faux, 2005; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Sloan *et al.*, 2013; Jauhari & Verma, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2016). Further statistical evidence claims sustainability has been elevated to boardroom level with 89 percent of corporate survey respondents ranking sustainability as very high (Ethical Corporation, 2015).

As noted there are credible academics and business leaders who advocate environmental, economic and social values as the future business pillars that will increasingly be demanded, legislated and seen as the norm. This position has also been mirrored in the tourism and hospitality literature (Jones *et al.*, 2016) and there is marked evidence that suggests sustainability is no longer considered a fringe ideal, but rather all industries must consider that perhaps there is no escape from it; the hospitality industry is no exception.

## **2.2 Sustainability and the Hospitality Industry**

Brotherton and Wood (2000, p. 162) defined the hospitality industry in this way:

The hospitality industry is comprised of commercial organizations that specialize in providing accommodation and/or food, and /or drink, through a voluntary human exchange, which is contemporaneous in nature, and undertaken to enhance the mutual well-being of the parties concerned.

The leisure industry (hospitality, lodging, hotel industry and tourism) represents one of the largest and fastest growing group of employers in the world (Baum, 2006; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Mayo, 1997). They are mutually dependant, interconnected and bound by customer-centric service orientation (Baum, 2006; Chawla, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). Arguably tourism, as the broader industry, is multisectoral, fragmented and profit driven (Sharpley, 2000) and defined by business (Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deucher, 2012; Schaper & Carlsen, 2004) which includes hospitality (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). Hospitality provides a critical interplay of services that support the larger tourism concept (Baum, 2006; Sharpley, 2009).

Indeed, tourism demands attractions, promotion, infrastructure and support services including the product and service of hospitality (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001) such as accommodation, the largest single sector in tourism (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Notably hospitality represents the bulk of the tourism offering and together they are one of the largest industries in the world (Baum, 2006; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deale *et al.*, 2009; Mayo, 1997; Sharpley, 2009) and can be considered interchangeably from a research perspective. Independently, however, hospitality is a big, global (Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deale *et al.*, 2009; Sharpley, 2009) and fast-growing industry (Baum, 2006; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Mayo, 1997). Therefore, hospitality must be acknowledged as a global employer of significant economic and social value, and a burgeoning industry that continues to grow.

Subsequently, in accord with that status, scholars attest that environmental, societal and economic responsibility must be considered (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Sharpley, 2000; Yepes, 2015). As a result, sustainability is fast becoming a significant and defining factor in hospitality where awareness, interest and demand is escalating rapidly (Deloitte, 2010). Academia has responded with research across a diverse spectrum of hospitality themes and issues (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000).

A review of the literature reveals environmental sustainability to be a key concern for the hospitality industry, with resource scarcity, rising costs (Bruns-Smith, Choy, Chong, & Verma, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) and consumption levels identified in the research as key drivers (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; International Tourism Partnership, n. d.; Sharpley, 2000). Hospitality's high consumption of resources significantly impacts the environmental system that it is part of and relies on, especially across the greater tourism product (Melissen, 2013). Core issues noted in the hospitality industry are energy and water-saving measures, green purchasing and waste minimisation practices (Jaurahi & Verma, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). These four initiatives fit with a sustainability lens, whereby renewable resources take preference and non-renewable resources are reduced or recycled (Hall *et al.*, 2010).

Accordingly, water, energy and waste are the most reported initiatives accounted for within tourism and hospitality triple bottom line disclosures (Medrado & Jackson, 2015). The next disclosure reported by Medrado and Jackson (2015) was community support. This indicates uptake beyond economic and environmental pressure and into a social realm further considered in green purchasing literature and more representative of the three-pillared approach. Response from hospitality stakeholders is varied, but speakers at the Cornell Hospitality Research Summit – *Finding Profit in 'Being Green'* – informed representatives of the hospitality industry that sustainability must be integrated into the business operation and should not be a couple of mere add-ons (Withiam, 2011).

A recent study however, suggested the essence of sustainability is disregarded in the industry, and critics see it more as a branding ruse to seduce eco-conscious consumers (Jones *et al.*, 2016). Irrespective of motive, the drivers for sustainability uptake have garnered an industry response but sustainable business performance reporting sits firmly in the large-hotel literature and is focused predominantly on energy, water saving, green purchasing and waste minimisation. The discussion that follows offers reasoning and insight into how and why sustainability can be included in a hospitality business model, and establishes probable stakeholders in the sphere of influence. However much of the evidence is drawn from large-hotel literature because that is where the literature is focused (Jones *et al.*, 2016) and, accordingly, their intentions and achievements dominate both academic and white paper information. Confirming the large-hotel research bias, Font *et al.* (2016) recently observed that the language in the literature favours large-hotel rhetoric.

The literature identifies the initial investment cost of sustainable implementation as higher than unsustainable options (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Sloan's study revealed some large hotels noted the long payback period of implementing sustainability initiatives, but acknowledged the cost saving and reductions in water and energy consumption. Once green strategies have been implemented, the return on investment (ROI) is difficult to quantify (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Withiam, 2011). As an example of a positive move to quantify performance, a United Kingdom (UK) energy efficiency scheme called the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) created a mechanism that incentivises

energy efficiency and performance and seeks to influence consumer attitudes (Deloitte, 2010). However, Dean and McMullen (2007) suggested that responses to environmental degradation and resource scarcity may be a profit-driven exploitation of green consumers' willingness to pay for solutions and actions that alleviate unsustainable practices. However, proof of sustainability is evident, as 80 percent of European hoteliers orientate their operations toward some level of sustainability; their key focus areas are energy-saving, water-saving, green purchasing and waste minimisation (Sloan *et al.*, 2013).

Hospitality is an energy-intensive industry (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Kular, 2014; Melissen, 2013; Ricaurte, 2012): there are open spaces to heat and illuminate, ambience to create, food and beverage to chill and meals to cook (Kular, 2014). Energy use from existing buildings in some large cities generates almost 80 percent of carbon emissions (Deloitte, 2010). Coal, oil and natural gas reserves represent 80 percent of energy used; they pollute and take years to replenish (Jauhari & Verma, 2014) yet there is no legislation to restrict resource use, nor any penalty for environmental damage (Sloan *et al.*, 2009). Large hotel chains are responding at some level. The InterContinental, Marriott and Hilton had pledged to reduce emissions by 20–25 percent before 2017 (Jauhari & Verma, 2014). Some authorities such as Deloitte (2010), concluded that pro-sustainability schemes like the CRC in the UK will eventually impact the hospitality industry as carbon reductions become the responsibility of the owner.

Initial design structure or a retrofit can optimise resources and reduce energy by 15–40 percent (Kular, 2014). Energy conservation can be considered at the onset or in the retrofit stage. The hospitality industry is reliant on buildings (Deloitte, 2010). Improved efficiency of buildings can lower operational costs and allow a hospitality enterprise to develop a business model and practice that complements its design (Deloitte, 2010; Kular, 2014). For example, the £220 million retrofit of London's Savoy which reopened in 2010 now generates 50 percent of electricity through a combined heat and power plant that cost £2.7 million. Cost-savings were expected to be reconciled in five years (Tuppen, 2012).

As green energy is produced more sustainably (Sloan *et al.*, 2013), it makes sense to optimise energy (Kular, 2014; Sharma, 2014), to think smarter about how businesses use natural energy like daylight as opposed to electric lighting (Kular, 2014). As an example, Stockholm's newly built Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel generates 1 mw of heat energy daily from its glass facades. In lay-persons' terms, this is enough to illuminate 90,000 normal low-energy light bulbs (Tuppen, 2012). These examples of action contrast with the view of Sloan *et al.* (2009) that renewable energy is not high on the agenda for large hotels.

The hospitality industry also consumes large amounts of water (Melissen, 2013; Sharma, 2014; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Water is present when humans grow, process, cook and consume (Sharma, 2014) and water scarcity will affect food production (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). The hospitality industry is therefore vulnerable to water shortages (Deloitte, 2010; Melissen, 2013; Sharma, 2014; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). International Tourism Partnership (n. d.) claimed that by 2030 fresh water demand will potentially exceed supply by 40 percent and Deloitte (2010) quoted the UN as stating that the global water situation is a disaster. Reusing towels and linen is a standard water reduction initiative (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Sloan *et al.*, 2013), but some say this is a greenwashing ploy (Sloan *et al.*, 2009). A hotel guest will directly use between 100–2000 litres of water per night. This broad range is a reflection of the array of provider types and levels, with luxury hotels normally at the high end (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). The hospitality industry may encourage water saving but efforts beyond this indicate a lack of urgency and awareness of water issues, locally and globally (Kasim, Gursay, Okumus & Wong, 2014).

More positively, in 2009 the Hilton chain published a commitment to a 10 per cent water reduction by the end of 2013 and this was exceeded with an actual reduction of 10.2 percent (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015). Recycling water is a means of water reduction (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015). A water saving of up to 10–30 percent can also be achieved through retrofitting (Kular, 2014). As an example, a recycling initiative by Frangipani Langkawi Hotels provides a natural habitat for a variety of species in their innovative grey water wetlands (Kasim *et al.*, 2014). Water is a precious resource and water efficiency, water-saving technology, recycling grey water along with water initiatives

introduced at construction and retrofit stages must be considered in the hospitality industry (Sloan *et al.*, 2013).

An additional issue is that of green purchasing. Globally, one third of prepared food is lost or wasted. The responsibility for this waste lies equally with producer and consumer and this wastage could be reduced if people reuse and recycle (Sharma, 2014). More consumers want locally sourced food (Alonso & O'Neill, 2010; Renting, Marsden & Banks, 2003; Withiam, 2011) and buying locally is a sustainable initiative that generates positive effects on the environment and production cycle (Sharma, 2014; Stubbings, 2009). Born and Purcell (2006) warned that researchers and food activists may assume local-scale food systems without question, and perhaps do not consider impacts beyond the agendas of involved stakeholders.

It seems reasonable to consider, as did Sloan *et al.* (2013) and Sharma (2014), that purchasing locally reduces travel distances which has multiple environmental benefits (a decrease in the consumption of fossil fuel, and reduced air pollution, road and sea damage) while providing fresh, available ingredients and supporting local employment and economy. However, Born and Purcell (2006, p. 195) insisted that "Local-scale food systems are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure." Siorak *et al.* (2015) urged that food availability and procurement should be mediated with a sustainable focus. Murray and O'Neill (2012) considered the 'locally grown' phraseology a stimulant for market share increases. Along with customer demand, other stakeholders, drive uptake too. Torres and Momsen (2004) identified significant benefits to local communities with a reduced focus on macroeconomic outcomes and suggested that a tighter link between end-user and producer reduces leakage, offers farmers a greater share and can stimulate economic, social and environmental sustainability. Alonso and O'Neill (2010) reported that some research identifies a threat to the hospitality industry's SMEs that omit local produce from their menus.

Warnings suggest local purchasing may not be as simple as it looks but there are some cogent arguments for considering the concept further (Alonso & O'Neill, 2010; Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Renting *et al.*, 2003; Sharma, 2014; Sloan *et al.*, 2013; Torres &

Momsen, 2004; Stubbings, 2009; Withiam, 2011). Much of the research argues positively for the production, sale and consumption of local food and a true need to explore the relationship between hospitality businesses and farmers (Alonso & O'Neill, 2010). For example, the links between supplier and business may not provide a permanent solution but building relationships, knowledge-sharing and promoting mutual understanding may contribute to positive, food sustainability outcomes in the future (Alonso & O'Neill, 2010). The ability to trace products and services from the cradle-to-the-grave enables eco-procurement choices that focus on low environmental impact and waste minimisation (Sloan *et al.*, 2013) and perhaps this is easier to see in a smaller enterprise, as Alonso and O'Neill (2010) indicated.

However, irrespective of the scale of the enterprise, hospitality as an industry is known as a substantial producer of waste (Melissen, 2013; Deloitte, 2010). The average hotel guest will create one kilogram of waste each night (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Yet landfill waste can be reduced by 50–90 percent (Kular, 2014) through retrofitting or initial design, and waste can be used to help not harm. Minimising waste by composting or vermicomposting nourishes the environment and reduces landfill (Sharma, 2014). As an example of waste minimisation and energy production, food scraps from London's Savoy hotel do not reach landfill; the scraps feed a biomass-to-energy power plant, which runs into the national grid (Tuppen, 2012). The Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow has implemented a similar initiative and recycles food waste into renewable energy (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, the Hilton pledged a 20 percent waste reduction by end of 2013 and delivered beyond the promise with a 24.9 percent reduction (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015). Large hotels seem to be delivering results for specific, sustainable actions in their operations and perhaps the directive is simple. The Soneva Resorts' case study detailed in Sloan *et al.* (2013, p. 84) summarises it: "The best way to manage waste is to avoid creating it in the first place." The waste-to-wealth ethos employed by Soneva Resorts is simply to reduce, reuse and recycle in order to conserve natural resources; save energy; decrease pollution; and yield reusable materials (Sloan *et al.*, 2013).

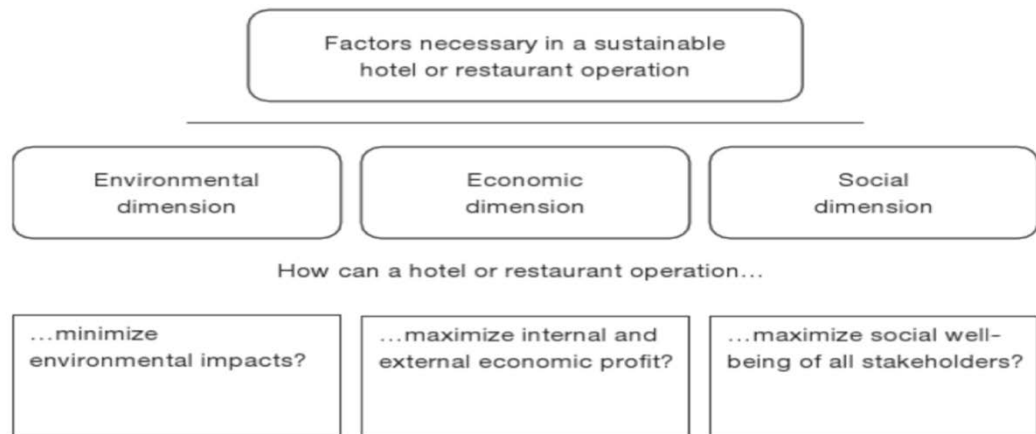
These examples of responses by the hospitality industry to sustainability-centric pressure explain some of what the industry is currently doing to counter their culpability. Although the motivation of the hospitality business to operationalise

sustainability has been questioned, the drivers for uptake are common themes in academic research and correlate with pro-sustainability schemes and accreditation. The uptake drivers are reflected in the practical modes of operationalising sustainable initiatives in the hospitality literature. Understanding the drivers by offering examples, despite the large-hotel dominance, helps make sense of the journey from theory to practice.

### **2.2.1 How is Sustainability Operationalised in Practice?**

Despite the above confirmation of the importance of sustainability to the hospitality industry, the issue of how operators operationalise and their reasoning for implementation outside of the large-hotel literature remains relatively unconsidered. Indeed, it is a challenge to operationalise sustainability (Deloitte, 2010; Hunter, 1995; Parker, 2011; Sharma, 2014), to incubate, induct and establish measures so the needs of future generations are not compromised. Operationalising a hospitality enterprise in a sustainable way takes time (Deloitte, 2010) and is designed to reduce resource consumption, to operate more efficiently and with less harm (Myung *et al.*, 2012, Sloan *et al.*, 2009). For instance, Willard (2012, p. 23) claimed that a truly practising sustainable enterprise will “do the right things because they’re the right things to do; they’re also good for the company.” Sloan *et al.* (2013, p. 22) adapted the Brundtland Report to define a sustainability operation specific to hospitality as “a hospitality operation that manages its resources in such a way that economic, social and environmental benefits are maximised in order to meet the needs of the present generation while protecting and enhancing opportunities for future generation.”

In their 2013 text on sustainability in hospitality, Sloan *et al.* attempted a sustainability operationalisation model (see Figure 1). The model details a pathway to embed sustainable dimensions into a hospitality facility. This ‘how to’ model encourages the user to think long-term across the three-dimensional pillars of sustainability.



**Figure 1. Sustainability dimensions in the hospitality industry (Sloan et al., 2013, p. 27)**

The environmental dimension responds to the hospitality industry's environmental impacts across a whole range of activities: from construction, manufacture, food cultivation and overconsumption, energy and water use, and waste production (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, according to Willard (2012), it makes sense to work with environmental interests and avoid degrading and depleting resources. Initiatives regarding energy, water, emissions, waste, food packaging and purchasing, recycling and reusing, and construction and landscaping are programmes cited by Sloan *et al.* (2013). However, the hotel sustainability model proposed by Mihalič, Žabkar and Cvelbar (2012) is a more complex conceptualisation and identified that environmental education for staff and customers should also be included. Ultimately, the objective when considering the environmental arm of a sustainable business model is to minimise any adverse practices that negatively impact the planet's resources and perhaps educating others is part of that plan.

The economic dimension asserts that a business must make a profit to survive and saving cost through water and energy efficiency are sustainability-orientated practices (Jones *et al.*, 2016). Yet a business's commitment to sustainability can be income generating externally through enhanced public relations and partnerships and internally through high staff motivation and morale (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Willard, 2012). Economic examples include accountability and economic performance, transparency, shareholder

value, and external costs absorbed by enterprise (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Mihalič *et al.* (2012) argued that prosperity-enhancing objectives are at the core of the economic dimension; however, their model specifically identifies customer satisfaction as a service-related indicator that in hospitality translates to economic outcomes.

The social dimension brings into question the hospitality industry's current contribution to local people's lives, its future contribution and considers human rights, working conditions, staff education and engagement across community, stakeholders and the public (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Programmes concerned with fair trade, public education, philanthropy into social contexts, nutrition and health, economic development in local areas, fair competition, human rights and diversity all come within this (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Mihalič *et al.* (2012, p. 704) extended this arm in their model to include 'the power to change.' This additional dimension encourages relationship building with organisations, communities and interested others, with the intention of encouraging sustainability consensus and uptake.

Although research indicates sustainability uptake and reporting is predominantly driven from the economic and environmental pressure dimensions, the social dimension has been recognised as similarly notable in both the Sloan *et al.* (2013) model and a recent report on triple-bottom-line disclosures in the hospitality industry (Medrado & Jackson, 2015). The operationalisation of sustainability in the hospitality industry is hard to implement, measure and practice according to Withiam (2011) and Jones *et al.* (2016). The foundational Brundtland Report was intended to increase hospitality enterprises' sustainable action and a model reflecting that directive was offered to translate this objective into practice. The model details environmental, economic and social direction with parity across the three dimensions and offers a guide to operationalise sustainability in a hospitality enterprise.

The examples of the sustainability operational outputs of large hotels, the hospitality model developed by Sloan *et al.* (2013), and the extensions to the hotel model proposed by Mihalič *et al.* (2012), together create a clearer picture of the current status of industry action, and why and how sustainability can be embedded in a hospitality business model. However, it is important to consider who the key actors or stakeholders are that

sit in the sphere of influence, specifically those who have the capacity to benefit, hinder or embrace sustainability uptake outside of the business implementing its practice. Exploring the internal and external pressures and the unique dynamics they present for each stakeholder will contribute to understanding the push-pull factors that may further drive uptake.

## **2.3 The Sphere of Influence**

A review of the literature reveals the importance of analysing who the stakeholders are in the operationalisation of sustainability. Research indicates that sustainability uptake in hospitality may be partly dependent on the aims and effectiveness of stakeholders', such as, customer, industry, regulation and education, and their rise to action through internal and external pressure. The sphere of influence, in short, can be identified from the literature and will be discussed in the following sections.

### **2.3.1 The Customer**

The customer is the central focus in hospitality (Chawla, 2015; Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). Scholars attest that the customer wants the hospitality industry to act more sustainably (Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deloitte, 2010; Deucher, 2012; ITP, n. d.; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Withiam, 2011) and sustainability is a key factor in customer satisfaction (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). However, Sloan *et al.* (2009) pointed out there is no sound 'green guest' character outline but observed, along with Deloitte (2010), that consumer attitudes continue to change towards sustainability and there is a growing expectation concerning responsible consumerism. Statistics published by Deloitte (2010) reveal that 95 percent of US business travellers believe sustainable initiatives are core endeavours the hotel industry must undertake yet, very recently, Jones *et al.* (2016) commented on the industry's slow uptake.

Increased transparency in business practice and knowledge sharing continue to inform a greater audience (Buckley, 2012; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2016). Customers are sophisticated and informed through an evolving technology-rich business landscape (Deucher, 2012; Murray & O'Neill, 2012). Future business is offered this instruction:

Business must reshape demand by making sustainable consumption more personal and relevant to consumers, leveraging the power of technology to drive engagement and transparency and by redesigning products and services to deliver increased value with fewer resources, thus making the sustainable choice the default choice (World Economic Forum, 2012, p. 6).

Increased awareness will contribute to the growing demand for sustainable hospitality offerings (Sloan *et al.*, 2009) and impact reputation and customer choice (Davidson *et al.*, 2011) in an industry known for its vulnerability to public scrutiny (Withiam, 2011).

Deloitte (2010) showed that customer choice pushes change, price, convenience, and brand and quality, while Withiam (2011) and Zhang, Joglekar, and Verma (2012) observed that customers do not necessarily want to pay for sustainable attributes. McMullen (2007) disagreed with this view, claiming that customers will pay for products and services that enhance sustainable equity. Jones *et al.* (2016) stated that consumerism highlights little appetite for lifestyle changes that strong sustainability commitment demands.

Despite the confusion over the extent of demand, there is evidence to suggest that some customer demand exists for sustainability practices in hospitality. Raised awareness and green accountability has the potential to increase pressure on customers to make more responsible choices. Customers fuel the sustainability movement as other stakeholders experience external pressure from rising demand and knowledge sharing through technology and transparency.

### **2.3.2 The Industry**

Some members of the hospitality industry are employing sustainability initiatives to some degree (Sharpley, 2000). Sustainability practices in hospitality can produce financial benefits (Dwyer, 2005; Kular, 2014; Medrado & Jackson, 2015; Roberts & Cohen, 2002; Stoddard *et al.*, 2012; Tyrrell *et al.*, 2012; Withiam, 2011). As a core business strategy, it can positively impact public image (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2013), relations with employees, and effectiveness in management (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Stakeholder considerations include enhanced competitiveness and market ranking

(Boley & Uysal, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Medrado & Jackson, 2015; Tyrrell *et al.*, 2012), superior stakeholder relations and cost savings (Sloan *et al.*, 2013; Tyrrell *et al.*, 2012) and guest loyalty (Medrado & Jackson, 2015). Deloitte (2010) forecast that the success of future hospitality businesses will ultimately be determined by the inclusion of transparent sustainability practices embedded across the entire business model. This information details the growing body of knowledge that exposes potential motivators for hospitality enterprise owners to consider a sustainable business path.

In 2006, Barry Sternlicht, for example, launched the first luxury, eco-friendly global hotel brand – 1 Hotel and Residence – which created a frenzy for nearly all major hotel groups to launch sustainable initiatives as a competitive advantage (Deloitte, 2010). The study by Sloan *et al.* (2009) of European hotels reported almost conclusively that sustainable initiatives created competitor advantage and increased profits. Respondents in their study also noted the benefits to society and the environment. In contrast, Jones *et al.* (2016) questioned the motives for sustainability uptake and argued that sustainability is a business directive detached from social and environmental concerns.

Some critics argue corporate interest in sustainability as a covert and cynical ruse and suggest corporations create the crisis that sustainability is deemed to solve, then the same corporations exploit sustainability through greenwashing and green-consumerism (Jones *et al.*, 2016). This casts a shadow over the catalyst for change and stimulates concern over how economic, social or environmental pressure is used, which stakeholders are called to action and who benefits. Jones *et al.* (2016) suggested that sustainable inclusions are used to increase workforce loyalty, promote image and enhance community relationships, exposing sustainability agendas that are almost entirely driven by traditional business interests and not inherently sustainable values.

Other scholars claim authenticity. For example, Kular (2014) suggested the public, tangible intention of large hotel chains to mediate positive, sustainable change could be seen as positive. InterContinental's David Jerome, for example, insisted sustainability is not expensive and an investment to future-proof hotels (Deloitte, 2010). Similarly, Faith Taylor, Corporate Vice President for Sustainability & Innovation, Wyndam Worldwide spoke of the importance of sustainability as reflected in the listing in Deloitte (2010, p.

43): “Sustainability is one of our top five strategic priorities because it impacts our business and reflects our core values.”

In 2016, Jones *et al.* claimed that a contradiction exists when leading hotel chains claim sustainability values but simultaneously pursue economic growth which, by nature, impacts environmental resources. Yet, the green hotel movement has continued to gain momentum not just in the West but in India and China, with the first Indian hotel gaining the highest platinum rating for green buildings under the US Green Building Council’s Leadership on Energy and Environmental Design (Deloitte, 2010). It is evident that there are potential, positive, sustainable benefits across the economic, social and environmental dimensions although amidst questionable motives. The stakeholders and the ratings may yet shed a positive light on the undeniable sustainable momentum, the cyclic push-pull factors between stakeholders and the impact of regulatory pressure.

### **2.3.3 Regulatory Bodies**

It is advisable for the hospitality industry to partner with regulatory bodies in order to shape sensible and achievable regulation (Deloitte, 2010). There is a vast array of sustainability labels and regulatory accreditations specific to hospitality (Melissen, 2013; Segarra-Ona, Peiro-Signes, Verma, Mondejar-Jimenez, & Vargas-Vargas, 2014; Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). While they can be confusing (Sloan *et al.*, 2009) they can also offer incentives and special treatments (Deloitte, 2010). Regulatory authorities spanning government and non-government agencies offer a range of best practice sustainability initiatives that are pivotal in shaping how sustainability will evolve in hospitality (Sharma, 2014). For example, in the early 90s the Travel and Tourism Industry Agenda 21 guidelines provided a set of codes to encourage sustainability best practice in the tourism and hospitality industries (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Indeed hospitality, as a sub-sector of tourism, has a vested interest in cultivating regulation that protects and improves the social and environmental resources that hospitality directly and indirectly relies on (Sharpley, 2000). Regulation is positive for developing sustainable food service outlets but sustainability-focused laws are soft: the discourse includes words such as ‘guidelines’, and ‘best practice’, and genuine uptake is perhaps a result of a less rigid structure (Siorak *et al.*, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). For the most part, sustainability reporting is voluntary (Faux, 2005), although sustainable

initiatives by private business contribute to regulatory adjustment (Buckley, 2012; Hart, 1997).

As an illustration, O'Neill (2016) reported on the collaborative efforts of 18 international hotel chains and regulatory partners in the design of the Hotel Water Measurement Initiative (HWMI) which is a free, benchmarking tool that measures and reports on water consumption in a consistent manner. The HWMI was launched in August, 2016 as a voluntary water conservancy application (ITP, n. d.); it is an example of resource stewardship with a clear road map which, according to Hart (1997), is a positive move toward sustainability. Similarly, Buckley (2012) saw regulatory response as a change-driver and promoted accountability measures as part of the key to positive sustainable uptake. According to some authors, (e.g. Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Segara-Ona *et al.*, 2014) and consistent with previous discussion, large hotels are embracing this formal acknowledgment as it demonstrates their sustainability focus (Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Segara-Ona *et al.*, 2014). Eventually, however, benchmarking will start at the outset of a hospitality business's life because the industry will be subject to pro-sustainable building adjustments in the future (Deloitte, 2010). In accordance with that prediction, Kular (2014) explained that the regulatory body LEED has a design, construction and operation performance standard for buildings with a brief to reduce energy (15–40 percent), water (10–30 percent) and landfill waste (50–90 percent). As an example, the Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative (HCMI) is a tool developed by a team of 23 international hotel chains, KPMG, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and ITP to measure and report on carbon emissions in a consistent way and is currently used by 24,000 hotels globally (ITP, n. d.).

Although some academics (e.g. Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) acknowledged the availability of audit tools and support agencies to facilitate sustainable initiatives in the hospitality sector, Faux (2005) observed they are more generic and not necessarily tailored to fit the industry. Similarly, Ricaurte (2012) observed the disconnects in sustainable reporting standards. However, put simply, the Ethical Corporation (2015, p. 14) proposed a means of measurement: "A good proxy for how seriously organisations take sustainability is, of course, how much money they are prepared to spend on it." It is expected that, as regulatory bodies support and insist upon sustainability concerns, the

hospitality industry will reciprocate and become proactive, educating and shaping regulation (Deloitte, 2010). Irrespective of who is pushing whom, whether regulation is proactive or reactive, the hospitality industry already has existing legislative direction and accreditation to foster sustainable operationalisation.

#### **2.3.4 Education Providers**

Other stakeholders of influence to consider in the sustainability debate are education providers. Some scholars have observed that sustainability education in hospitality is scant in the classroom (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Millar, 2012; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) as is research (Deale *et al.*, 2009) and yet education, training and development of employees at all levels are necessary (Baum, 2006; Millar, 2012). Sustainability education is needed to upgrade service delivery, operating standards and business success (Baum, 2006). Sustainability knowledge in hospitality is becoming a wanted commodity for educators, owners, managers and students and will increasingly be an advantage for new graduates and their employers as knowledge-sharing spills into practice across the operation (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Millar, 2012; Sloan *et al.*, 2013).

Operationalising sustainability is a problem area (Hunter, 1995; Parker, 2011). Students are not able to implement sustainable practices or maintain existing strategies within the workforce (Millar, 2012; Parker, 2011). Kasim *et al.* (2014) pointed to water knowledge education as an example. Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers, and Steger (2005) agreed and deduced that managers and business owners lack knowledge and reasons to employ sustainable strategies. Parker (2011) and Sloan *et al.* (2013) summed up the disconnect and pointed to the gap that exists between providing sustainability-based education for hospitality students and the increasing demands for this knowledge in the workforce.

Prominent hospitality educators and researchers at the Center for Hospitality Research in New York noted that hospitality industry leaders, specifically in the US, are highly concerned about sustainability issues (Giebelhausen & Chun, 2011). Essentially the hospitality industry is heading towards sustainability; education must follow and go beyond just knowing; employees must understand how to apply ideas and concepts to find sustainable solutions (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). There is academic concern in hospitality surrounding the disconnect that exists between knowledge and

practice and a credible argument can be made that education may be a vehicle to enable, enhance and contribute to operationalising sustainability in hospitality enterprises.

### **2.3.5 Research on Sustainability**

Sustainability research in hospitality is in its very pioneering stages (Boley & Uysal, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2016); it is acknowledged as complex and multidimensional (Baum, 2006) and is challenging to practice (Buckley, 2012; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deloitte, 2010). Hospitality, as part of tourism, operates in a world rapidly altered by social and environmental change, yet Buckley (2012) noted that few academics are proactively undertaking research to wrestle with this pressure. Dwyer and Faux (2010) along with UNWTO (2015) have promoted tourism that includes the sub-sector hospitality as both a vehicle for economic growth and a key tool for a desired human and planetary future. Faux (2005) suggested that the industry's diversity is a unique opportunity to lead business conduct in a way that best reflects society's ideals. In practice, the hospitality industry is far from sustainable (Sharpley, 2000; Deloitte, 2010; Buckley, 2012) and voluntary response to the need for sustainability is unlikely (Buckley, 2012).

The hospitality industry's response to sustainability has been slow (Jones *et al.*, 2016) and Deloitte (2010) admitted that business is not leading the charge. Deloitte (2010) suggested that hospitality must recalibrate the industry's non-responsive attitude to sustainability issues and recognise the long-term consequences of its apathy. Others agree and have noted a groundswell of recognition that business direction must change and embrace a more sustainable attitude (Hall *et al.*, 2010; Hart, 1997). However, it appears there has been little movement over the past four decades (Buckley, 2012) and theory and practice are not aligned (Buckley, 2012; Sharpley, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009). Tyrrell *et al.* (2012) noted the continual calls-to-action for a practical mechanism to plan and evaluate sustainability in practice.

It would be unfair to suggest no progress has been made toward sustainability by hospitality customers, industry, regulatory bodies, education providers and researchers. Yet a number of gaps have been alluded to by academics directing future researchers towards exploring individual experiences, perspectives, values and responses to sustainability operationalisation (Buckley, 2012). Sustainability may be better

understood by researchers observing progress in practice (Buckley 2012; Melissen, 2013; Sharpley, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009). Further, Font *et al.* (2016) recently advocated research that sought to understand the impact of external influences on an individual's pro-sustainability responses believing that this type of research would generate explanatory power. These recommendations further enforced the suggestion made by Buckley (2012) that for research to be beneficial it is critical to make sense of what the industry does and why.

Understanding the day-to-day sustainability actions in hospitality's SMEs and what obstacles and benefits the artisans observe on their journey may contribute useful knowledge and bridge the gap between theory and practice. Examining the pressure that drives sustainable uptake on a micro-level offers a different research lens. This lens moves away from the research concentration on large hotels recently observed by Jones *et al.* (2016) and focuses on individual, small scale operations as identified previously. The bottom-up perspective promoted by Wilbanks and Kates (1999) to unravel the conundrum of sustainability-related issues highlights the advantages of micro-scale understanding. Deloitte (2010) has insisted that business and societal norms will move toward sustainability with surprising speed as the circle of actors and pressures impel each other along. Therefore, looking at the customers', industry's, regulatory bodies' and education providers' spheres of influence from the perspective of an owner or manager of a SME as the impacted stakeholder, offers a sound research site.

The bottom-up view may provide micro-scale to macro-scale links, which Wilbanks and Kates (1999) and Wilbanks (2003) said deserve more attention, improvement and understanding across a range of sciences and sustainability. A micro-scale view is an optimum looking glass for investigating the relationships and experiences of the actors (Wilbanks, 2002; Wilbanks, 2003; Wilbanks & Kates, 1999) where the interplay amongst the sphere of influence is more attributable (Wilbanks & Kates, 1999) and less complex (Wilbanks, 2002). Therefore artisans, as small producers, offer an individual perspective that corresponds to scholarly recommendations and concerns and, to the best of my knowledge, is a new lens of discovery. This may help bridge the gap between theory and practice across micro- and macro-scale hospitality businesses.

Discussion will now turn to SMEs as key stakeholders in operationalising sustainability, and the attributes of the individual driving the enterprise.

## **2.4 The Gap: Small to Medium Enterprises, Sustainability and Change-makers**

Large hotels may be the subject of much study and their negative impact obvious, but as Deale *et al.* (2009), Davidson *et al.* (2011) and Deucher (2012) observed, SMEs dominate the hospitality industry. Therefore, as part of the industry, SMEs are part of the problem. With most sustainability research focusing on large hotels there remains a potentially knowledge-rich gap in exploring the interplay between SMEs, value-driven entrepreneurs and artisans as noted change-makers in history. SMEs, entrepreneurs and individuals have been advocated by academics separately and in combination as probable research areas to enhance the sustainability body of knowledge and as potential change-makers towards a more value-laden world. As far as can be determined, no research has been undertaken that combines a hospitality SME business model and sustainability entrepreneurship considering them along with the contemporary hospitality artisan individual.

### **2.4.1 Small-Medium Enterprises**

Nearly twenty years ago, Hart (1997) insisted positive sustainability-focused change would be driven by and become the responsibility of private business, eliciting correction in consumer behaviour and public policy. More recently some academics proposed that SMEs are critical to the sustainability discussion (Deucher, 2012; Lawrence *et al.*, 2006; Schaper, 2002) and have important roles to play in progressing sustainability (Buckley, 2012; Deucher, 2012). SMEs as a cluster group represent enormous volume, and their environmental (Hoskin, 2011; Lawrence *et al.*, 2006; Schaper, 2002; Schaper & Carlsen, 2004; Willard, 2012) and social impact is substantial (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006; Willard, 2012). Accordingly, SMEs have responded to some degree; Willard (2012, p. 23) reported that SMEs represent a high percentage of the businesses reaching top-grade status of sustainable enterprises, where the founders' values are reflected in the companies' actions and the goal is to contribute to a better world.

SMEs offer a micro-scale research site to explore connections with customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders from their own perspective (Willard, 2012), and represent an under-researched area in the hospitality literature where gaps still exist concerning an individual perspective (Buckley, 2012; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Lawrence *et al.*, 2006). Individuals operating an SME are the focus of this research. Lawrence *et al.* (2006) indicated that a gap exists in exploring those social practices of SMEs which reflect a sustainable value system. The individual action that creates value through innovation determines the correlation between SMEs and entrepreneurship which, outside of this union, are not synonymous (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2010). According to Tzchenteke *et al.* (2008), understanding the value creation and currency of the individual running the SME has been identified as an auger of sustainability adoption.

This point is important because SMEs and entrepreneurship may be key instruments of change to embracing and advocating the softer, value-laden attributes of sustainability. Walley and Taylor (2002) suggested that the role sustainability-focused entrepreneurship and SMEs play in the ongoing interplay between society and enterprise warrants more exploration. Similarly, Dean and McMullen (2007) argued that the significance of entrepreneurs must be acknowledged, along with the opportunities for enterprises and invention as critical change-making ingredients towards positive sustainable changes.

#### **2.4.2 Entrepreneurs**

Historical scholarly literature has identified entrepreneurs as those who disrupt the status-quo and are instrumental in shaping economic, business, and societal change (Schumpeter, 2003). It is accepted in academic literature that entrepreneurs are opportunists (Anderson, 1998; Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Parrish, 2010; Schaper & Volery, 2004; Schumpeter, 1983) and that the current unsustainable business practice and market imperfections may stimulate major opportunities for a new strain of entrepreneur (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007). In 2010, Hall *et al.* and Kuckertz and Wagner observed an awareness among well-regarded thinkers that entrepreneurs represented a probable conduit and likely cure for sustainability concerns. Hall *et al.* (2010), on the other hand, commented

on the scarcity of research exploring this gap in mainstream entrepreneur literature. By contrast, Kuckertz and Wagner (2010), espoused an emerging stream of literature on entrepreneurs in conjunction with sustainability.

However, it is important to discuss the attributes of a traditional entrepreneur. Schumpeter (2003) identified that an entrepreneur will create new products, methods of production, market openings, and means of supply. He or she will destroy dominant organisations and businesses and, in doing so, reorganise an industry. The term ‘creative destruction’ designating the disruption of the status-quo was coined by Schumpeter in 1944 (Schumpeter, 2003), and locates the entrepreneur at the centre of change and notably active in the revolution of society and business norms (Brines, Shepherd & Woods, 2013; Lavoie, 2015; Schumpeter, 1983). Research acknowledges that an entrepreneur will create and exploit opportunities (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Drucker, 2011; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Lavoie, 2015) perhaps through consumer preference, technology and social norms (Drucker, 2011). However, as Lavoie (2015) identified, an entrepreneur’s interpretation and perception of what an opportunity looks like can change over time. This is important in the context of sustainability because sustainability represents a modern-day opportunity and a contemporary market imperfection which, by design, attracts entrepreneurial activity. As a result of this link, other academics have encouraged researchers to study these entrepreneurs who embrace and operationalise sustainability initiatives in their business model (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Parrish, 2010).

Exploring the opportunities or drivers that propel an entrepreneur into sustainable business may, as Parrish (2010) proposed, shine a light beyond the narrow view of traditional entrepreneurship and offer insights into their unique and potentially unconventional actions. Indeed, it is accepted that the agenda of the traditional entrepreneur was economically driven (Anderson, 1998; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Schumpeter, 1983). However, according to Anderson (1998), it can be morally and values-driven also. In essence, when an opportunity presents itself, an entrepreneur will create and extract value; it is the value currency registered by the individual that differentiates this non-traditional or new breed of entrepreneur (Anderson, 1998; Reddy, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, according to Parrish (2010), a sustainability

entrepreneur performs beyond the economic value agendas, or ‘currency’, aligned with traditional, entrepreneurial motives as identified by Schumpeter (2003) and Drucker (2011), and includes social and environmental values too (Parrish, 2010). As a result, researchers in the sustainability entrepreneur space (Hall *et al.*, 2010; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Parrish, 2010; Walley & Taylor, 2002) suggested this indicates promise and potential for social and environmental health.

Indeed, an individual’s value currency and commitment to company models beyond economic agendas may, as Faux (2005) inferred, be the necessary and changing philosophy for future business. The concept of values is fundamental to entrepreneurial activity (Anderson, 1998) and key to understanding the new breed of entrepreneurs. Anderson (1998, p. 137) offers a value-laden lens: “it is only our conventions which may cause us to think of value only in monetary, or economic terms.” If entrepreneurs are values-focused it demands more enquiry into an individual’s value currency; hence the discussion now moves to the topic of the sustainability entrepreneur, by first introducing social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship operates on social currency and is an individual or collective action distinguished from a traditional entrepreneur’s action by value creation and not limited to financial return (OECD, 2010; Reddy, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Anderson (1998) simplified the matter by saying they are entrepreneurs with a value system that is mirrored in their entrepreneurial actions. Although some (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Walley & Taylor, 2002) question motive, social entrepreneurs are active agents of change that align with social concerns and promote self-help trends to exploit opportunities in the social space and contribute to a pro-sustainable society. At the core of social entrepreneurship is the desire and action to create social value through improving the lives of individuals and communities by promoting social change (OECD, 2010). Further, social entrepreneurs have opportunist characteristics with a social mission (Dean & McMullen, 2007; OCED, 2010; Sloan *et al.*, 2013), and they manage their enterprise and use entrepreneurial principles to create social change (Anderson, 1998; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). They also create networks with entrepreneurial organisations with a mandate to improve and solve social issues (OECD, 2010). As Dean and McMullen (2007) identified, improving societies’ uptake on sustainability

through entrepreneurial response to sustainability-relevant market imperfections have enjoyed little exploration (Dean & McMullen, 2007). This adds to the research gaps highlighted previously and helps explain the importance of an individual's values and their potency in fuelling business action.

Sustainability entrepreneurs are distinct with their ability to balance benefits to self, others and nature (Parrish, 2010) and manage parity across economic well-being, social values and environmental consciousness (Elkington, 1999; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010). Sustainability entrepreneurs, independently of motive, are promoted by Walley and Taylor (2002) as dynamic change-makers vital to innovative progression and, as Anderson (1998) argued nearly two decades ago, sustainability as a moral-dimension fuels and emboldens entrepreneurship. More recently, Hall *et al.* (2010) argued that entrepreneurs are critical agents in the transition to a more sustainable society but suggested more exploration was needed to advance this important link. An extension of the link between sustainability and entrepreneur was identified by Paxson (2010) in her study of artisan cheese production in the United States. Paxson's study offered an example of how artisan entrepreneurs created new ways of production by reinvigorating a handcrafted and regionally nuanced artisan cheese offering to attract a sustainability motivated customer.

As a result of past research, and specific to the aim of this research, the discussion will now align entrepreneurial behaviours with accounts of artisans in history as change-makers and disrupters of the status quo. The links between SMEs, sustainability entrepreneurs and artisans represent a combination of attributes that bring past scholars' recommendations to a pinnacle. Critically, this nexus provides a research site and a novel perspective to add to the body of knowledge on sustainability in hospitality which will be explored by pursuing the important question, "How do artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?" Discussion now turns to artisans who are linked to SMEs and entrepreneurs, and whose status-quo disruptive behaviours impacted social and economic change throughout history in addition to relevant current literature on artisans.

### 2.4.3 Artisans as Entrepreneurs Towards Sustainability Action

Small enterprises represent a significant force in giving structure to a country's economy and are a recognised outlet for entrepreneurial activity (Schaper & Volery, 2004; Schumpeter, 2003). Over two decades ago, some academics (e.g. Howell, 1996; Perkins, 1989; Rock, 1998) observed an increase in the degree of recognition historians placed on the role of entrepreneurs and artisans in building some societies through their disruptive actions. These links common to entrepreneurs and artisans, were shared by Schumpeter (2003) over six decades ago, and, although he argued that artisan small production was destroyed by entrepreneurs, a scholarly assessment of modern German progress by Hansen (2009) demonstrated otherwise. Schumpeter (2003) suggested entrepreneurs revolutionised the economic structure by creating new offerings and processes by realising opportunities that were generated through capitalist policy and industrialism. Yet later, as an example, Rock (1998) identified artisans as the most critical and foundational element that shaped American business, creating networks of game-changers and revolutionary political rebels that challenged socio-temporal problems.

According to the literature, artisans are, by definition, the classic handcraftsmen (Farr, 2000; Rock, 1998), including food-related crafts (Jones, 2013; Morris, 2009; Rock, 1998; Tregear, 2005). However, Tregear (2005, p. 2) argued that two characteristics define artisans: "In one strand of literature, artisans are distinguished by the type of trade they practice, while in another, they are defined on the basis of having distinct goals or value sets." Indeed, social and cultural values (McKitterick, Quinn, McAdam, & Dunn, 2016; Tregear, 2005), as well as environmental and economic values (McKitterick *et al.*, 2016; Tregear, 2005) have been identified in contemporary artisan research. So characteristically, and relevant to this research, the artisan can be seen as value driven. The artisan exercises direct control over his or her production (Kristofferson, 2007; Pappano & Rice, 2013), and is often a small-business owner (Pappano & Rice, 2013; Rock, 1998, 1999). Also, according to numerous academics, scholarly articles and research both past and present (e. g. Blundel, 2002; Cooper, 2011; Hansen, 2009; Howell, 1996; Kristofferson, 2007; McKitterick *et al.*, 2016; Morris, 2009; Prothero, 1971; Rock, 1998, 1999; Tregear, 2005), the artisan demonstrates creative destructive behaviours. Research positions artisans as actors likely to affect

change given the current issues around sustainability. The discussion now turns to historic artisan behaviours and influences.

Rock (1999, p. 44), an academic specialist in artisan studies, stated, “Artisans were strong participants in colonial and revolutionary politics. They consistently represented the more radical point of view.” It can be inferred then, that internationally, artisans have consistently influenced change in regulation, society, politics and business. In the Americas, artisans had a fundamental role in driving business and politics; they procured capital, founded their own banks and were considered inventive entrepreneurs (Morris, 2009; Rock, 1998). For example, artisans shared governance across New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. Further, Boston-based artisans were partly responsible for Jefferson’s presidential victory in 1800 (Rock, 1998). According to a Canadian study by Kristofferson (2007), artisans between 1840–1871 possessed liberal independence and some were vocal in the press. Also, artisans were noted as up-and-coming political players in Latin America and supported the 1872 presidential election of civilian Manuel Pardo in Peru (Garcia-Bryce, 2005). Similarly, according to Cant (2015), artisans had a lively role in twentieth century Mexico.

In Europe, artisans were entrenched in the guild-based actors of medieval Britain and Europe (Kristofferson, 2007) and, according to Cooper (2011), guild-based artisans had a key role during the Middle Ages in English social, intellectual, institutional and economic life. Artisans were renowned for their entanglement in organised societies (Kristofferson, 2007; Pappano & Rice, 2013; Rock, 1998), and were instrumental in securing market position, prices and social security (Rock, 1998). Similarly, in the early 19th century, the disruptive artisan voice was associated with Chartism (Prothero, 1971). Chartists used protesting techniques such as poetry to express concern about socio-economic problems (British Library Board, 1841). For example, an archived British newspaper depicted the artisan spirit as, “ringing out the people’s political, moral, and social aspirations, and elevating the standard of humanity for all” (British Library Board, 1841). Similarly, in Germany, Hansen (2009) affirmed that artisans’ positive impact on social and economic development in both a historic and contemporary context, suggested artisans were a striking feature of German’s modern

political economy. Artisans themselves proposed the ideology that, as producers, they played a core role in the well-being of society (Rock, 1998).

There are criticisms however of the historic artisan's motive. Sibalís (1998) questioned the radical behaviour assigned to artisans and suggested it was more about the class solidarity of a diverse mix of people. Rock (1999) also critiqued the notion that artisan values fuelled rebellion and instead suggested artisans may have desired social and economic prestige. However, Morris (2009) criticised the modern academic cavalry for judging the artisans' actions to be self-serving, profit-fuelled moves to slow imports and protect national markets. Morris (2009) reviewed the historic artisan literature and questioned the scholarly claims that align artisan behaviours solely to economic values. Other scholars also alluded to this (e.g. Nash, 1979; Schultz, 1990; Young, 2006), and inferred that motivation for action cannot accurately be determined in the absence of understanding the artisans' values and considering them in a socio-temporal context.

For example, Morris (2009) suggested that artisans built up their competencies to enable personal liberty and to improve family and community welfare. Schultz (1990) was of the same opinion and also argued that artisans were not bound solely by economic values but that they acted with a moral, social and business consciousness. Similarly, Lucie-Smith's (1981) historical accounts detected the radical artisan voice in revolt against a dehumanised way of life and environment, and expressing hope for a better future. Most importantly these accounts signify that artisans of old respond to changes in the social and economic climate, impact change, and are values-driven.

The socio-temporal context and values observed previously are relevant and important when considering the issue of sustainability in contemporary businesses and society. Currently, the term 'artisan' captures attention and is the tag line on many labels claiming to be on crafted products. Pappano and Rice (2013, p. 473) observed, "one sees the term *artisan* applied to everything from Dunkin' Donuts, "artisan bagels," to ..." Although this may be a clever response to anxiety over mass production, artisan craft is popular, and evokes old-fashioned, feel-good factors (Pappano & Rice, 2013). Some (i.e. Mathers, 2011; Schindler, 2012) inferred regulation and over-governance may stifle artisan production. However, according to others (e.g. Garcia-Bryce, 2005;

McKitterick *et al.*, 2016; Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Waldman & Kerr, 2015), the demand continues to grow, and Pappano and Rice (2013) claimed the modern artisan has reinvigorated an old rebellion.

While sustainability, artisans and hospitality SMEs feature in research literature, these themes do not appear to have been grouped together for research. Therefore, this research aims to fill a previously unconsidered knowledge gap and, as a result, these themes have been considered independently in this literature review. Examples of related research include, the qualitative case study by Blundel (2002) centred on the 'network architecture' evolution, and production scale changes of two English artisan cheesemakers over five decades. In addition, a qualitative study by McKitterick *et al.* (2016) focused on regional food production in Ireland's SMEs and considered the perspective of 35 artisan producers and 25 'institutional actors'. While these studies used different terminologies (e.g. institutional actors, network architecture), to the stakeholders within the sphere of influence described in this literature review, the enabling and inhibiting factors they discussed offered some usable parallels relevant to this research.

The McKitterick *et al.* (2016) study revealed that artisans' radical innovations and knowledge-exchanges were developed and more prevalent outside of the sphere of influence rather than within it. Both Blundel (2002) and McKitterick *et al.* (2016) inferred a correlation between small-scale artisan production, collaborative problem solving, and reliance and trust in networks of like-mindedness (e.g. family, suppliers, staff) outside the sphere of influence (e.g. regulatory bodies). Further, the regulatory cost of compliance was criticised by participants in a study by Blundel (2002) and perceived as a barrier to artisanal product integrity. Studies by Blundel (2002) and McKitterick *et al.* (2016) suggested that the artisans' self-generated networks facilitated a greater understanding and desire for product providence and they associated this with product authenticity, taste and quality. In contrast, Tregear's (2005) qualitative study involving 20 artisan food producers, revealed less collaboration in artisan networks. McKitterick *et al.* (2016) identified a disconnect between SME artisans and the sphere-of-influence stakeholders. As an example, the artisans said they were confused, dubious,

lacking in trust, unsure of how to access help, and not sure of any benefits to them (McKitterick *et al.*, 2016).

The three studies mentioned (Blundel, 2002; McKitterick *et al.*, 2016; Tregear, 2005), while having a focus on artisans, were not directly focused on hospitality SMEs or sustainability. However, the following authors who focused on food tourism offered some further insights into the importance of artisans in the sustainability discussion. A study by Everett and Aitchison (2007) on regional identity interviewed 16 restaurant owners with a commitment to local food. Carruthers, Burns, and Elliot (2015), and Everett and Aitchison (2007), discussed the financial investment, resources and formal mechanisms needed to facilitate industry diversification and sustainability-focused change in European regions suffering economic and social restructuring.

Although the interviewees in the Everett and Aitchison (2007) study were concerned that tourism would result in environmental and social harm the research findings proved otherwise, indicating instead a revitalised regional economy, socio-cultural pride and environmental awareness. As an example, the 'Eat the View' initiative described by Everett and Aitchison (2007), reconnected customers with nature, encouraged local food consumption, providence and knowledge, and inspired environmental appreciation and stewardship. Among other food tourism initiatives, investment favoured artisan food production, organic farming and food providence enhancement, resulting in positive social, economic and environmental outcomes (Carruthers *et al.*, 2015). The investment and resources identified in these studies suggest a serious attitude toward sustainability according to Ethical Corporation (2015) standards and both articles (i.e. Carruthers *et al.*, 2015; Everett & Aitchison, 2007), reported successful outcomes. Some examples of success include collaborative small-producer and artisan food networks, educational festivals, events celebrating food providence, and substantial industry diversification mirroring investment strategy (Carruthers *et al.*, 2015; Everett & Aitchison, 2007).

This shows that small producers and artisans can disrupt the status-quo in the face of the social and economic pressure reported in these articles, indirectly confirming the links made in this literature review between artisans and sustainability. Essentially, both these

studies (Carruthers *et al.*, 2015; Everett & Aitchison, 2007) and those by other academics (e.g. Croce & Perri, 2011) found a correlation between social, cultural and economic benefits and food-related tourism. Indeed, both indicated that artisans had a key role in these discussions. The literature shows there have been some studies on contemporary artisans. However, to date, scholars do not appear to have considered the link between historic artisan behaviours, the emergence of artisan production, and the modern-day issue of sustainability.

Artisans as entrepreneurs provide a unique perspective that is characterised by a mandate to disrupt the status quo, and create revised processes, goods, modes of supply and management. They reinvigorate offerings, market strategies and production methods. Traditional business strategy, and the current unsustainable path, offer an opportunity for disruption and refinement. Academics nominate SMEs and entrepreneurs as key contributors to the global sustainability crisis and artisans add to this dimension. Therefore, given an artisan's influential status in history and the current social, environmental and economic equality debate, it is likely that a hospitality artisan with a sustainability-focused mandate may demonstrate behaviours and hold relevant perspectives that can benefit pro-sustainability change in the industry.

## **2.5 Summary**

A review of the literature has shown that sustainability is a topic of significant interest; many would say a global necessity. Hospitality is a known resource-user, vulnerable to resource depletion, and academics and industry are concerned about the degree to which hospitality enterprises are responding to sustainability-centric pressure. Large-hotel literature dominates the hospitality industry voice and reporting, yet hospitality is made up predominantly of SMEs and, according to Jones *et al.* (2016), SMEs are not given to sustainability reporting. This may be part of the reason academics such as Wilbanks (2002) and Willard (2012) promoted exploratory research at a micro-scale level, specifically from an individual perspective, and Buckley (2012), Willard (2012) and Jones *et al.* (2016) infer the fuel to drive sustainability-focused change may exist.

The literature shows that SME operators are noted for their entrepreneurial attributes and, when considered in conjunction with sustainability, a revised concept of value

currency makes sense of a new type of entrepreneur functioning beyond convention and traditional motives. In particular, the tourism and craft-related industries provide examples where business and moral values and entrepreneurial links can be found (Anderson, 1998; Carruthers *et al.*, 2015; Everett & Aitchison, 2007), which intersects with hospitality SMEs, sustainability-entrepreneurs and artisans.

Artisans are shown in the literature to be a contemporary version of their historical ancestors, revisiting old methods of production and responding to consumer and societal anxiety about mass production. Like their historic namesakes, contemporary artisans may be driven by self-serving motives. Indeed, the contemporary version may just be a clever label to initiate positive consumer response. Today's artisans may not be the movers and shakers cited throughout history but both versions share common characteristics that align with entrepreneurial behaviour and status-quo disruption. The literature demonstrates that artisans in history provoked and impacted business and political change, so today's hospitality artisan may be a key stakeholder in disrupting the modern socio-temporal and enviro-temporal issues of sustainability. The research presented in the literature review included a range of considerations demonstrating avenues of status quo disruption, particularly emphasising artisans as probable sustainability entrepreneurs. Sustainability has been shown to be an important part of a positive future. The Golden Circle perspective, coined by Sinek (2009) demonstrates status quo disruption in history, and illustrates how others have impacted change (see Chapter 5).

This research therefore aims to explore the question, "How do artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?" or essentially, "how do they do it?" Although secondary to the main intention, this study will also explore what benefits or hinders this business model choice, and seek to identify knowledge that could help other interested operators and stakeholders within the sphere of influence. It is hoped the combination of characteristics specific to the participants recruited for this research will provide a unique perspective on operationalising sustainability in their SME. It is also hoped that the lived experiences of the participants will showcase similar change-making behaviours typical of historic artisans and that this customised perspective will add value to the existing body of knowledge and help bridge the gap between theory

and practice. Hospitality SME owner/managers that operationalise sustainability and are artisan producers are central to this research enquiry and could hold valuable knowledge that may increase sustainable uptake within their industry.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

The aim of this study is to explore the question, “How do hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME?” or essentially, “how do they do it?” This practical question stimulated curiosity and drove the research; it responds to the gap that exists between theory and practice. The objectives of the research are to explore what benefits or hinders this business model choice and identify practical knowledge that could help other interested operators and stakeholders within the sphere of influence. It was determined that these research objectives suited an interpretive approach with its acceptance of multiple realities, since it relied heavily on understanding the experiences of artisans operating sustainability-centric hospitality SMEs. This chapter describes the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology chosen for this research. The methods used for data collection and analysis are then discussed.

### **3.1 Interpretivist Paradigm**

The interpretivism paradigm requires the researcher to non-judgementally acquire, interpret and communicate the participant’s unique reality. Crotty (1998) described interpretivism as one of the five major paradigms for social research and many authors (e.g. Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Jennings, 2010; Patton, 2002; Scotland, 2012) noted that it is suitable for explaining human and social behaviour. Fittingly, this research sought to explore, understand and describe participants’ experiences, perceptions and feelings. How the researcher understands these concepts determines his or her choice of paradigm and methodological pathway selected according to the researcher’s world view, or epistemology and ontology (Creswell, 1994). Epistemology, ontology, and how these terms fit with ‘reality’ and ‘knowledge’ are key areas of understanding. Scotland (2012) suggested that ontology relates to reality, what it is and how it is legitimised. Epistemology, according to Patton (2002), is centred around the nature of reality and knowledge (p. 68); at its foundation is the question, “How do we know what we know?” (Patton, 2002, p. 134). Ultimately the researcher’s paradigm asserts an epistemological and ontological position (Scotland, 2012) which is interwoven in what Patton (2002) identified as design, data, fieldwork and analysis strategies.

Therefore, the researcher's epistemology and ontology, according to Creswell (1994), is differentiated by his or her understanding of the nature of reality, the relationship between researcher and researched, the role of values, and the language used. The research aim demanded an empathetic understanding or *verstehen* as termed by Max Weber meaning "subjectively understanding" or "interpretation in subjective terms" (Weber, 1978, p. 57). The listening-ear approach to enquiry, posited by Grant and Giddings (2002), suggests that listening to people is the backbone of an interpretivist paradigm and this facilitates conduits to understanding. Jennings (2010) suggested that the interpretive paradigm in social sciences is recognised as constructivist, however the paradigm used is referred to as 'interpretivism' in this thesis.

It is understood that knowledge value exists and is best found at the source, from those who are actively engaged and are involved in an environment where the research question can be answered. However, according to Myers (2013), the knowledge generated may vary across place, time and situation. Jennings (2010, p. 40) acknowledged:

The people studied will not be representative of the wider population – the findings of a study are specific to those who participate. The research will acquire an in-depth knowledge of the tourism phenomena or experience that is grounded in the empirical world.

With that understanding, an interpretivist inductive approach is appropriate for the aims of this research, as it places value, seeks understanding, and makes meaning from the perspective and lived reality of social actors or participants in a situation-specific investigation (see Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 1994). Therefore, it is assumed the multiple realities perceived by participants will provide the material from which to build understanding about how hospitality SMEs operationalise sustainability from the perspective of artisan owners and managers.

Scotland (2012, p. 12) claimed that "the interpretive paradigm does not question ideologies; it accepts them." As identified by other authors (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2000; Schwandt, 1994), understanding participants' motivations, meanings, reasoning or, as stated by Schwandt (1994, p. 221), "[the] complex world of lived

experience from the point of view of those who live it” is paramount for the interpretivist researcher. As a researcher, I aligned myself with interpretivism and similarly to Schwandt (1994, p. 225), believe that “social agents are considered autonomous, intentional, active, goal directed: they construe, construct, and interpret their own behaviour and that of their fellow agents.”

The central focus of this research is to understand and interpret the experiences of hospitality SME artisan owners and managers operating within a sustainability-focused business model. An interpretivist paradigm meets the research objectives, the researcher’s world view and interest area. While interpretivism cannot make factual claims, it can deliver similarities and differences across participants’ subjective interpretations and these can be insightful explanations of behaviours and actions from the participants’ perspective. Therefore, it must be accepted that interpretivism offers a situated and constructed relativism perceived by the participants and interpreted by the researcher both of which, as Crotty (1998, p. 42) stated, “are developed and transmitted in a social context.” As described by Creswell (2003), and consistent with interpretivism, this thesis aims to “generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings” (p. 9) and contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding sustainability practice in hospitality environments, notably that related to artisans.

## **3.2 Methodology**

Methodology has been described as the unique pathway to discovery chosen by a researcher based on an understanding of what justifies knowledge, how it is sourced, collected, collated and analysed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Feilzer, 2010; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Crotty (1998) described methodology as a strategy or action plan, and Jennings (2010, p. 36) as, “a set of guidelines for conducting research.” On the basis of these definitions, a qualitative methodology is identified as a strategic fit that supports the interpretivist paradigm and is discussed throughout this chapter.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Methodology**

Qualitative and quantitative research are the two main research methodologies according to some authors (Creswell, 1994; Kumar, 2014; Patton, 2002). Quantitative

methodologies are systematic and scientific (Jennings, 2010; Kumar, 2014) and often termed traditional, positivist, experimental or empiricist (Creswell, 1994). Quantitative methodologies seek to explain reality using controlled experiments, repeatable procedures, hypothesis testing and deductive reasoning (Creswell, 2013; Jennings, 2010; Patton, 2002) and would therefore employ and be driven by epistemologically aligned methodologies. The objective, fact-focused pursuit of ‘absolute’ knowledge which Crotty (1998) aligned with quantitative methodologies was not suited to understand the varying realities of hospitality SME artisans’ sustainability business inclusions from an insider’s or emic perspective. ‘Emic’, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (n. d.), means “of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied.” The insider perspective therefore must be attributed to both the participants as SME artisans, and the researcher as a hospitality practitioner. By contrast, according to Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) ‘paradigm assumption’ claims, a quantitative researcher would assume reality is objective, measurable, and could be found impartially; such an approach does not fit the aim of this research.

More fittingly, the qualitative researcher values an emic approach to the phenomenon of interest, acknowledges biases and accepts there are multiple realities perceived by the participants (e.g. Creswell, 2013; Jennings, 2010; Kumar, 2014; Patton, 2002). The qualitative researcher accepts that reality is subjective, unique and biased from both the point of view of the participants and the researcher. Consistent with the assumptions of some academics (Creswell, 2013; Jennings, 2010; Kumar, 2014; Patton, 2002), a qualitative methodology is grounded in a real-world setting and knowledge is generated through an intersubjective lens (Creswell, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Jennings, 2010; Patton, 2002). Qualitative sustainability-focused research has been scarce in the hospitality literature according to Myung *et al.* (2012) because, as Lynch (2005) observed, hospitality research traditionally has been informed by quantitative methods.

A recent survey of the hospitality literature conducted by Kim, Lee, and Fairhurst, (2017) similarly identified that quantitative studies dominate the hospitality literature where survey-orientated research methods predominate over more exploratory designs. In the sustainability-focused hospitality SME literature qualitative methods seem more

appropriate given the scope of understanding generated from an individual perspective and micro-scale study. For example, exploratory research by Tzschentke *et al.* (2008) used an interpretivist paradigm and face-to-face interviewing methods as the preferred lens and instrument for understanding the sustainability behaviours and attitudes of small hospitality firms. By contrast, Font *et al.* (2016) examined the reasons for, and barriers to, sustainability for hospitality SMEs using a quantitative survey questionnaire method with over 900 respondents. Jones *et al.* (2016) acknowledged large-scale questionnaires may generate voluminous data from a greater population of stakeholders but, like Font *et al.* (2016), argued that richer insights are more likely to be garnered using qualitative methods, particularly interviews.

Indeed, these recent reviews and observations regarding the future of hospitality research align with the view of Myung *et al.* (2012) which promoted qualitative investigation as a natural and important pathway for building knowledge in this new academic field. Qualitative research thus offers a recommended, industry-important lens to explore sustainability in practice through the eyes of the participants and, as identified by Creswell (1994), acknowledges the participants, researcher and reader as interpreters of the knowledge generated.

### **3.3 Methods**

The methods used for this research were face-to-face interviews, open questions or an unstructured interview style, and thematic analysis. The interview data were supported by field notes taken by the researcher. Other methods such as focus groups were not considered due to the varied locations of the SMEs. Questionnaires and surveys were too quantitative, prescriptive, and confining, and did not allow for freedom of voice and therefore would not answer the research question adequately. These methods are consistent with the data collection steps prescribed by Creswell (1994) for qualitative methodologies, complementary of interpretivism and exploring a subject where little is known. The methods discussed in this chapter are suitable exploratory research methods in a sustainability-centric SME hospitality context and were selected as the best methods to meet the research aims.

### **3.3.1 Interviews and Transcription**

Consistent with naturalist inquiry (Jennings, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and to facilitate in-depth understanding from stakeholders' personal perspectives as described by Ritchie and Lewis (2003), interviews were conducted with seven participants at their hospitality SMEs. One participant was interviewed using Skype, at their request. Interviews lasted about an hour and the interview process was primarily as Berg (2007, p. 89) stated, "a conversation with a purpose." With the permission of participants, the interviews were audio recorded, allowing for greater listening and focus, as suggested by Patton (2002). Three separate recorders were used to ensure against device failure and audio inaccuracy.

Transcribing the data has advantages for the researcher (Gibbs, 2013; Thorne, 2008) and some authors (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 1993) encourage this as a sound starting point for data familiarisation. Counter to this advice, and embracing the viewpoint of Gibbs (2013) who acknowledged that outsourced transcribers have their advantages, an independent and experienced professional was employed to transcribe the interviews. It was considered that the professional status of the transcriber would increase the likelihood of data accuracy. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement and created a verbatim document to relay the true voice of the speaker as advised by Braun and Clarke (2006) as the minimum acceptable transcription standard.

Recognising this outsourcing as a potential weakness in the research, specifically with respect to data familiarisation and researcher assurance of accuracy, a number of counter measures were used. Firstly, the transcripts were checked against the recordings, as recommended by Gibbs (2013), for accuracy, data immersion and enhancing data analysis. Data immersion and data accuracy were further enhanced by listening to the audio and reading the transcripts repeatedly as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) to improve data accuracy and familiarisation. Finally, manual coding, as discussed in the analysis section of this chapter, further improved data accuracy, familiarisation, and immersion, and assisted in strengthening credibility in the collection and analysis phases.

Transcriptions were not shared with participants. According to Forbat and Henderson (2005), transcript sharing stems from a feminist ideal to promote participant inclusion, ownership and empowerment. Although this practice can increase validity it does not take account of the fact that participants' perspectives may, and do, change over time. Interpretivist research acknowledges the findings derived from the transcripts are a snapshot of knowledge-rich understandings unique to the socio-temporal context from which they were communicated. As such, and as pointed out by Forbat and Henderson (2005), when considering an interpretivist lens, multiple and amended versions of transcripts are not considered more-true since, by nature, interpretivist research accepts many truths and many perspectives.

Gideon and Moskos (2012) advocated a high degree of preparation prior to the interview to increase the probability of superior results. Accordingly, I read extensively and attended events to garner knowledge about sustainability. Increased knowledge, as identified by Gideon and Moskos (2012), enabled an informed level of subject familiarity. Undoubtedly this was advantageous in interviews and facilitated mutually respectful communication. Specifically, increased subject understanding, knowing what other sustainability-focused business owners did and did not do, helped inform questions and elevated subject confidence during the interview process. A structured interviewing style was considered to compensate for lack of experience and time constraints as suggested by Patton (2002), and to reduce researcher bias (Jennings, 2010). It was decided that the structural rigidity of this interview style would be counterproductive for the participant's voice and freedom to answer the research question. Therefore, a semi-structured interview style was chosen. However, during the interview process participants carried the conversation in new, unexpected and interesting directions. As a result, it was determined that unstructured interviews were more appropriate. Unstructured interviews serve to create rapport and trust, facilitate power neutrality, and promote a transactional relaxed space to encourage depth of discussion, as argued by Jennings (2010).

Open questions were used while guiding the process and keeping the discussion on track. Authors such as Gideon and Moskos (2012) and Myers (2013) stated that this level of informality increases the probability of richer content. Although more time-

consuming at the analysis stage than closed questions (Gideon & Moskos, 2012; Silverman, 2001), open questions provided a guide only since, at times during the interview process, the participants' responses went in an unexpected direction and required clarification. The open-question, unstructured interview combination used by Andringa (2012) to research the transition of hospitality SME entrepreneurs to paid employment, created space for the participants to open up offering unexpected perspectives, ideas and personal stories. New information surfaced, illuminating pathways, as Jennings (2010), and Gideon and Moskos (2012) had predicted. As a result, new understandings evolved. At times, the interviews got off-topic, and this produced a mix of unexpected and valuable contributions. This level of informality offered flexibility and, as predicted by some authors (e.g. Gideon & Moskos, 2012; Myers, 2013), resulted in richer content but, at times, was hard to manage. For example, some participants were quite politically oriented and allowing their conversations to run generated unexpected information. This seemingly off-topic discussion considered alongside field notes engendered a code called 'radical ideas'. This example provided assurance that the methodologies chosen were applicable to the research question. As Font *et al.* (2016) and Jones *et al.* (2016) indicated, this depth of knowledge and understanding would otherwise have been missed using a more rigid data collection design, coupled with the absence of cross-referencing transcripts, audio and field notes.

The questions were a guide only (see Appendix A) and remained practice-based and focused on how the participants operationalised sustainability and what enabling or inhibiting factors were important. For example, participants were asked to imagine a regulatory body representative was in the room and then invited to explain to them what they could do to help make the participants' journey easier. Over the eight interviews, the word 'entrepreneur' was not mentioned in the questions at any stage. Interestingly, entrepreneur was communicated only twice and by the same participant during the interviews, but many of the behaviours associated with an entrepreneur were reported by the interviewees. The concept of entrepreneur became evident in the literature review as a common factor recommended in academic studies of SME behaviours, historical accounts of artisans, and as a vehicle and knowledge-rich research site for exploring probable means of sustainability-focused uptake and action. Again, this was indicative of the importance of the process and reflection.

### **3.3.2 Documents and Field Notes**

Many authors recommend using documents as a source of subject knowledge (Myers, 2013; Patton, 2002) but others (Thorne, 2008) assign less weight to them, suggesting that documents as data sources have their limits. While it was not necessary to use the extensive array described by Patton (2002) – including board minutes, private memos and annual reports – documents contributed a valuable source of information. Two participants offered documents during the interview, a few directed me to their websites, and other documents were actively pursued. These documents provided a wealth of information including, but not confined to, maps promoting food and wine trails, affiliations and accreditations, sustainability-related education, policies, community initiatives and consumer education. Documentary data reinforced the businesses' commitment to sustainability, indicated networking collaborations, showcased their business and customer offering, and contributed other forms of knowledge. The documents were not abundant nor were they a main focus but their contribution helped build understanding.

Field notes, as promoted by academics (Gibbs, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1979; Thorne, 2008), were used to contribute trustworthiness to this research. Specifically, they were used to cross reference, facilitate impartiality, guide the process of interpretation, and counter bias during the recruitment, data collection and analysis process as nominated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The field notes were a tool and, consistent with Thorne's (2008) approach, were used to track and develop questions, concepts, interpretations and ideas. These were entered as they formed – after telephone conversations, before and after interviews, and during analysis. Field notes were kept in a journal and photo images representing some of these are included in Appendix B.

### **3.4 Sampling and Recruitment**

This research employed purposeful sampling. Some authors acknowledge that purposeful sampling is typical of qualitative inquiry (e.g. Jennings, 2010; Mertens, 1998; Patton, 2002). However, according to Scotland (2012), a quantitative or positivist methodology would be more inclined to employ random samples, to assert impartiality, improve verifiable evidence, and claim value-neutral knowledge. However, random

sampling does not create a concentrated focus on the issue under study and is therefore an inappropriate and inadequate tool to answer the research question. More realistically, Patton (2002, p. 230) reasoned that “purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study.” Purposeful sampling is therefore suitable for recruiting participants that have the experience necessary to answer the research question and also honours what Sandelowski (2002) identified as the material world where a flood of evidence sits waiting to add context and depth to the research. However, in reality, since some recruits changed their minds, a type of snowball sampling occurred as participants negotiated the recruitment of suitable others from within their sustainability-focused networks. Snowball sampling, according to Atkinson and Flint (2001), is suitable for recruiting particular social groups that may be difficult to identify. While this was not intended, participant withdrawal, often at the last minute, presented a challenge and was addressed using the best means available.

Eight participants were interviewed in this research and each received a participant information sheet to start the process of recruitment (see Appendix C). Small sample sizes and micro-scale studies have been discussed and justified in previous chapters. A formal invitation and consent form were sent to each participant following initial contact to engender transparency in the process and trust. The eight participants, their businesses, and anything pertaining to their businesses that might reveal their identity was purposefully omitted, and pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality.

To meet the initial criteria for participation in this research, it was deemed necessary for the interviewee to be an owner or manager of a hospitality business that

- was a small-medium operation located in New Zealand,
- included sustainable practices in its daily operations,
- produced one or more artisan offerings, and
- was affiliated with sustainable stewardship through formal agencies. However, this changed as time progressed and is discussed in more detail below.

‘Ownership of SME’ refers to participants who may be part-owners, or are members of a family that is recognised as owning the SME. As discussed, SMEs are important, and were chosen because they represent a large portion of the hospitality industry, are understudied in academia, and represent over 97 percent of businesses in New Zealand. Sustainability stewardship is discussed in the section headed ‘Trustworthiness’ later in this chapter.

The inclusion of artisan in the criteria was based on the literature of historic accounts of artisans. Artisans in history have been reported as disrupters of the status quo affecting change to era-specific social and business problems. Today, sustainability is considered a significant global issue. Sustainability literature promotes entrepreneurs, individuals and micro-scale business exploration as promising knowledge pockets for exploration to seek understanding. Artisans have not yet been explored in hospitality literature as a profile dimension that may provide increased sustainability-focused behaviours, era-specific disruption, and improved understanding.

### **3.4.1 Building Relationships and Securing Participation**

I joined the Conscious Consumer Network (CCN) which is an accreditation agency used by hospitality outlets to authenticate sustainability-focused practices (CCN, n. d.). Consumers with a sustainability consciousness identify a hospitality enterprise commitment by the badges displayed on their shop-front certifying each initiative. Both the CCN website and mobile phone app have a member directory listing each SME’s badges. The website and the app were sources of knowledge, and provided access to the right mix of participant criteria.

I also became a member of the Sustainable Business Network (SBN). Like the CCN, membership fluctuates so the total number of members is not reported in this thesis. According to Agar (1996) common associations create bridges to knowledge sources through affiliation, opening doors and getting the researcher closer to the information more quickly. SBN promotes sustainability uptake by New Zealand businesses, offers practical support through sustainability tools and resources, and helps businesses to measure their progress and redefine profit. SBN offers businesses performance reports, provides guidelines for sustainability certification and facilitates collaborative projects,

networking events and information forums. I attended a vast array of seminars, symposia and gatherings over a two-year period, and had built relationships with members and staff. From his own research experience, Agar (1996) noted his ability to engender trust through association and to build relationships swiftly, eliciting compliance, enthusiasm and a superior level of openness which facilitated more elaborate information and answers. His approach made good sense and offered a fast track to knowledge sources while offsetting the time-poor characteristic so common with academic research. Membership with SBN and CCN created numerous advantages including networking, credible affiliation and, as encouraged by some academics (Agar, 1996; Sword, 2012; Thorne, 2008), information garnered from outside expected knowledge pools. Both sustainability-accredited directories are accessible to the public, and yielded a list of potential participants. An agency member mediated introductions, and a letter of introduction was sent to six potential participants who held membership with one or both of the SBN and CCN agencies. The letters of introduction described the research intention, including areas of interest under study and alluded to my hospitality background and affiliation which, as Agar (1996) predicted, created a positive response. Letters were sent out by email from SBN to three of their members (one common with CCN) with an immediate positive response from all recipients committing their support. The letters were sent out by email from CCN yielding a further two participants.

The six participants were contacted by email over a two-month period, to arrange interviews and all seemed eager to contribute. Of the six, two changed their minds and one failed to meet the appointment for a scheduled interview. This last-minute challenge prompted the need for snowball sampling as mentioned previously. Of the three successful interviews, two participants contacted peers in their own network who fitted most of the criteria but did not have formal sustainability accreditation or affiliation. Both of these sustainability-focused businesses were recognisable as potential pools of knowledge to answer the research question. The two interviews were secured and carried out the same day. After these five interviews, more potential participants were selected from the CCN and SBN website and introductions to another four were made through these channels, eventually confirming two more participant interviews. One additional owner was contacted and the interview took place by Skype.

In summary, a total of eight participants took part in the research from the total of 13 approached. The size of this sample is consistent with the advice Kumar (2014) gave and congruent with the philosophies that underpin this research: that size and criteria are determined by the researcher's judgement concerning data saturation and who could provide optimum answers to the research question. In that regard, the sample size and participants chosen delivered rich data to answer the research question and the supporting questions of interest. Therefore, saturation was achieved, whereby aspects of new information became less frequent. The participants' profiles were gleaned but not solicited throughout the interview process, and they list the sustainable stewardship, artisan offering, location and the status of the participant as owner or manager (i.e. profiles that aligned with the sampling frame). The profile of each artisan and a brief description of their hospitality SME follows.

### **3.4.2 Artisan and Small-Medium Enterprise Profile**

Identifiers have been removed to maintain confidentiality as promised. The participants and their sustainability and artisan-centric hospitality SMEs are introduced using pseudonyms (e.g. Zac and Zac's SME.) All SMEs meet the hospitality, sustainability and artisan-inclusive criteria established as sample parameters for the research and are simply referred to as artisans and SMEs to avoid repetition. The artisan product profiles include coffee, wine, preserves, sauces, honey, non-alcoholic beverages and beer.

**Table 1. Artisan profiles**

<b>Artisan</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Owner/Manager</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Location</b>
Carl (m)	SBN/CCN	owner	organic coffee	urban
Wendy (f)	CCN	owner	wine	rural
Olly (f)	no	owner	organic wine	rural
Jay (m)	no	owner	preserves	rural
Bea (f)	SBN	owner	beer	rural
Matt (m)	SBN/CCN	owner	saucers and preserves	urban
Zac (m)	SBN/CCN	manager	honey and preserves	urban
Pat (m)	no	owner	bottled drinks and preserves	rural

*Carl's SME* is located in a suburban area with artisan organic coffee central to the customer offering with tasting and education available as a niche business inclusion. Accreditation contributes to his successful SME branding narrative.

*Wendy's SME* spreads over a number of acres and is located in rural New Zealand. The restaurant is situated so diners can take advantage of the garden and vine views. The SME extends to cellar door education, and artisan wine sales, both on-site and in retail environments.

*Olly's SME* features a sustainability designed venue. The SME has cellar door sales, wine education and a menu adapted to optimising organic and locally sourced food, complemented with artisan organic wine. The venue provides an aesthetic experience for the diner looking over the uncorrupted organic vineyard.

*Bea's SME* was developed in a paddock in rural New Zealand over 20 years ago. The orchard and gardens provide some of the ingredients for the café and artisan drink production, and live music complements the offering. This provides customers with an

aesthetically pleasing atmosphere for dining, with educational and entertaining experiences central to the design.

*Jay's SME* offers niche accommodation, dining, and artisan preserves, offered on a site of several acres in rural New Zealand, and managed using natural land management techniques. This hospitality offering has numerous opportunities for customers to engage in nature, educational resources, or just escape into the landscaped gardens and orchard.

*Matt's SME* is in a suburban environment, and offers an international dining experience with artisan salsas and sauces made in his shared off-site production kitchen. Matt and his partner own and operate the SME and sustainability messaging is at the heart of the enterprise, visible on both walls and menus. Matt relates artisan to traditional production processes, and described a very time-consuming process he uses to make his food offerings.

*Zac's SME* complements a larger sustainability-focused entity with gardens, beehives, worm farms, community orchards and environmental educational resources. The venue offers customers an aesthetic, educational and entertaining experience, with environmental messaging at the heart of the information. Artisan food items are grown, produced, packaged, retailed and used as ingredients on-site, and are complementary to the overall essence of the facility. The sustainability and artisan inclusions contribute core ideals and practices for stakeholder gain and buy-in, spanning community, visitors, research, education and tourism alike.

*Pat's SME* is around ten years old. It is located rurally and the surrounding land with massive gardens and an array of fruit trees provide for the restaurant. Unintentionally the gardens have become the central hub of the SME. The gardens offer a beautiful focal point from the restaurant delivering an aesthetic and entertaining experience to customers. The restaurant extends this offering with a seasonally driven menu, delivering a unique local taste. The gardens create an educational resource for customers and staff alike and contribute to the sustainability and artisan business model.

### 3.5 Thematic Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis was used, guided by the coding and theme generation steps developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to facilitate interpretation beyond mere description. Interesting, conflicting and important data sets (relevant data for analysis) were extracted and coded from the data corpus (all data). The data items (individual parts such as interview transcripts) were then reduced to data extracts (coded chunks of texts) as described by the thematic analysis conventions of Braun and Clarke (2006). As such, quotes are used to illustrate the themes in the findings to support a narrated argument, giving the participants voice and therefore increasing authenticity.

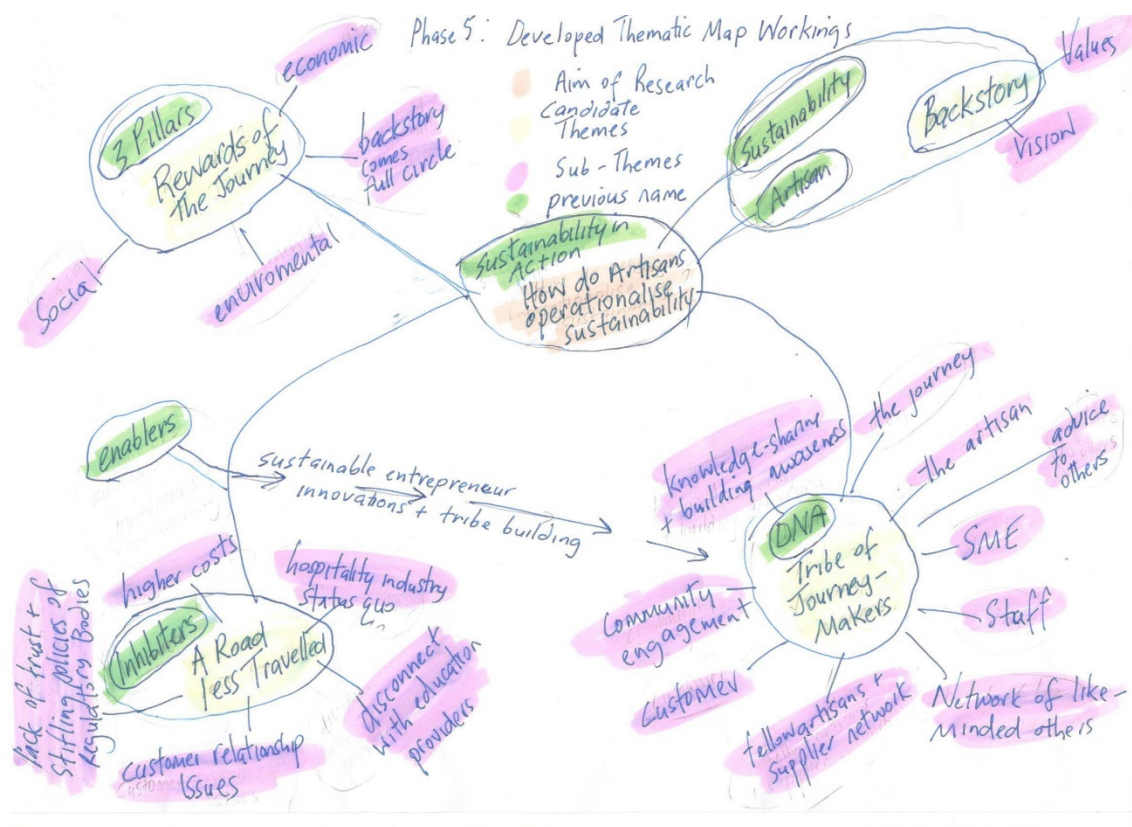
Although Coffey and Atkinson (1996) claimed there is no ‘set’ coding method agreed upon by qualitative experts, coding was conducted using thematic analysis conventions as prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and in conjunction with Ruggunan’s (2014) recommendation that coding language must be consistent with method. As a recommended starting point, prescribed by authors such as Braun and Clarke (2006) and Rossman and Rallis (2011), data extracts were highlighted and margin notes were made on the eight transcripts. Some writers support and simultaneously warn against the use of software programmes to assist in data coding (Gibbs, 2013; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Thorne, 2008), while others firmly acknowledge that coding software cannot substitute for the researcher’s intellectual, analytical work (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Mertens, 1998). As such, computer software was considered to assist with the management of the analysis process, but deemed unnecessary and therefore not used.

The manual transcript codes were cross-referenced with highlighted data extracts from other data items (field notes, documents). This resulted in 97 data-driven initial codes, probable themes, repeated ideas, inconsistencies and contradictions. The 86 codes were put into organised groupings, consistent with the advice of MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, and Milstein (2008) to promote order. Descriptions of each data code were constructed and aligned to each of the 86 codes, as advised by other authors (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Gibbs, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Code names were described and interpreted from the perspectives of the participants, an activity or strategy or were related to setting – as itemised by Creswell (2003) – alongside verbatim data extract segments.



and speak for themselves which is typical of social science research according to Creswell (2014). However, some codes were named to encompass the full meaning of their content, which is consistent with Miles and Huberman's (1994) claim that the researcher assigns words and in doing so has begun to make meanings. Similarly, Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 96) list detailing what constitutes a good thematic analysis identified that "the researcher is positioned as active in the research process," themes do not just emerge.

Due to the demands of data reduction, a wall-sized whiteboard was painted on two full walls of the office as a visual aid. A large working surface like this is promoted by some authors (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994) to facilitate the process of analysis, description and interpretation. The 'code workings picture' helped to reduce the data, interpret the meanings, and shows the analysis process in action (see Appendix D). From this, a developed thematic map (see Figure 3. Developed thematic map workings: Phase 5), evolved through reconsidering themes, inconsistencies, relationships, analysis and through challenges from supervisors and academic peers. Figure 3 is shown below and includes a colour key to illustrate how the themes developed.



**Figure 3. Developed thematic map workings: Phase 5**

The four themes; *backstory*, *a road less travelled*, *tribe of journey-makers*, and *rewards of the journey*, are italicised throughout the text and discussed in the findings chapter (see Chapter 4). The inductive analysis process allowed the participant's voices to be captured and this resulted in renaming some of the final themes and sub-themes. Chapter 4 shows the final thematic map (see Figure 4. Final thematic map), to represent phase 6 of the analysis, and as suggested by some authors (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Ruggunan, 2014), this helps to support the flow of themes and arguments made in the findings. The final thematic map responds to the research aim, "How do hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME?"

### 3.6 Ethics Considerations and Approval

This research considered the ethical issues of confidentiality, respect for participants and the ethical protocols of Auckland University of Technology. Ethics approval (15/204) was granted on 9 June 2015 from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (see Appendix E).

Steps were taken to ensure confidentiality so the participants, their businesses, and the data were securely protected. In the findings, and consistent with the ethical considerations of this research, a pseudonym was used to distinguish one participant from another, while offering the desired confidentiality. To facilitate informed consent, the appropriate information was communicated and explained to all participants by phone, through secondary parties (CCN and SBN), email, and just before the face-to-face interviews and audio recording. Participation was voluntary throughout the entire process; participants had the option of not answering questions and could remove themselves from the study at any time.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

Positivists rely on statements of validity and reliability, but these terms are less appropriate for this qualitative research. Consistent with Guba's (1981) qualitative terminology, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were more fitting for this research and addressed the trustworthiness of this report. Academics such as Shenton (2004) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) claimed credibility is the most important element to generate trustworthiness in a research project. Accordingly, credibility was the main focus and objective in this research. Trustworthiness is consistent with an interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodology; it is an approach recommended and prescribed in other social sciences by academics such as Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Jennings, 2010; Patton, 2002; and Scotland, 2012.

As mentioned in the sampling discussion, locating particular groups that possessed the experiences and knowledge to answer the research question proved difficult. The artisan and sustainability labels are bandied around in hospitality and I was concerned with the authenticity of the claims and the effect of an imprudent selection process. To help prepare for this research, as per Agar's (1996) advice, relationships were formed with regulatory agencies. The SBN and CCN association gave access to a participant population from which a purposive sample was derived, ensuring a level of sustainability-focused reputability. Membership of SBN and CCN, symposia, information events, and relevant white papers, all helped to develop subject familiarity. While subject familiarity is advocated by Thorne (2008), Lincoln and Guba (1985) warned that immersion may impact a researcher's judgement. Biases and judgements

are part of the nature of the interpretivism paradigm, consistent with qualitative methodologies, as advised by Creswell (1994). Credibility, according to Shenton (2004) is also improved by using repeated questioning to uncover deliberate untruths. Consistent with an interpretivist epistemology, the participants' perceptions and experiences were accepted as truths and, as such, repeated questions were used more to clarify meaning and enhance understanding.

According to Shenton (2004), credibility is also generated through regular discussions and peer scrutiny. Therefore, regular meetings were held with my supervisors, experienced researchers, and peers to discuss progress. Constructive criticism was invited and the work was challenged consistently and productively. As referred to earlier (see Documents and Field Notes, Section 3.3.2) a field notes journal was used throughout the research process to record and reflect on matters that arose.

Another element of credibility suggested by Lincoln and Guba, (1985) is member checking whereby transcripts and evolving findings are offered to the participants to cross-check. While this was addressed in the transcriptions section of this chapter (see Interviews and Transcription, Section 3.3.1), non-inclusion is further justified as Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller, and Neumann (2011) identified its infrequent use and questionable impact on the ethical considerations of research. Further, it was considered inappropriate to demand more of the participants' time since hospitality is a time-poor industry and it was difficult enough acquiring a suitable cluster of participants willing to offer an interview. To offer further credibility, verbatim extracts are included in contextual text chunks in the reporting of findings in Chapter 4 to illustrate the participants' voice and support the accompanying narrative.

### **3.8 Limitations**

At some level all research has limitations, and this study is no exception. Interpretivism demands a sensitivity to individual meaning, where reality is the subjective construction of an individual's unique perspective. There is a degree of positive self-acknowledgement attached to sustainability and, by design, participants may be self-reporting biases while avoiding discussion they determine not fitting. For example, participants may not understand or be aware of the invisible ideologies that may be

shaping their actions and agency and therefore their perceptions may be considered incomplete. Some academics argue that value-free interpretivism is not possible (Creswell, 1994). Where value-free objectivity is the hallmark of quantitative research, value-laden subjectivity may be considered a limitation of interpretivism. The nature of this research was most suited to a qualitative methodology and interpretivist paradigm and, as such, the biases and assumptions of the researcher must be acknowledged and may be considered a limitation of this study by those of a positivist tradition. The decisions on what to study, who to study, what methodology is most suitable, and what data are important and unimportant is ultimately decided by the researcher.

The difficulty securing participants may be seen as a limitation of this study although, as previously discussed, a sample of eight is consistent with some previous artisan studies (e.g. Blundel, 2002; Tregear, 2005), sustainability studies (Everett & Aitchison, 2007), and recommended by academics (e.g. Font *et al.*, 2016; Jones *et al.*, 2016). This difficulty may also be seen as a reflection of the low rates of SMEs in New Zealand that have a sustainability operationalisation model, and further indicative of the bias toward large hotels alluded to in the literature. Conducting further interviews with the participants to cross-check some aspects of perception across the participants may have rendered some further insights. However, although the location of the SMEs and the large distances between them created an interesting mix of participants, it was not practical, nor financially agreeable to have more than one interview. In addition, the time-poor nature of hospitality and the generosity of participants at the first interview made it, from my opinion, inappropriate to ask for more of their time.

The findings indicated that perhaps the rural SMEs demonstrated more entrepreneurial and artisan-of-old behaviours than their city-bound counterparts. There could be a number of reasons for this, including the demands of rural businesses, community inclusion and support, and specific to the lack of access and formal mechanisms apparent in city locations. However, the small sample size eliminates any credible claims of comparison but future research may consider location differences more specifically.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter detailed the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods used in this research. Despite most previous research employing positivism, interpretivism has been justified as an appropriate paradigm for hospitality and sustainability research, and to understand the perspectives of participants engaged within these phenomena. The methods discussed are identified as the least used in hospitality research history but promoted as the most effective for exploring areas where little knowledge is known. The participant criteria and selection process are detailed and illustrate purposeful sampling as an appropriate mechanism to cluster knowledge-rich research sites. The participants' profile table and brief introduces the reader to participants in this research and the nature of their artisan business.

Thematic analysis is rationalised as an appropriate analytical tool for this research and complementary of interpretivism. The ethical considerations are considered, identified and approved. The trustworthiness and limitations of the research are also discussed. In summary, this methodology was chosen as the most effective pathway to examine “How do hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME?” or essentially, “how do they do it?”

## Chapter 4. Findings

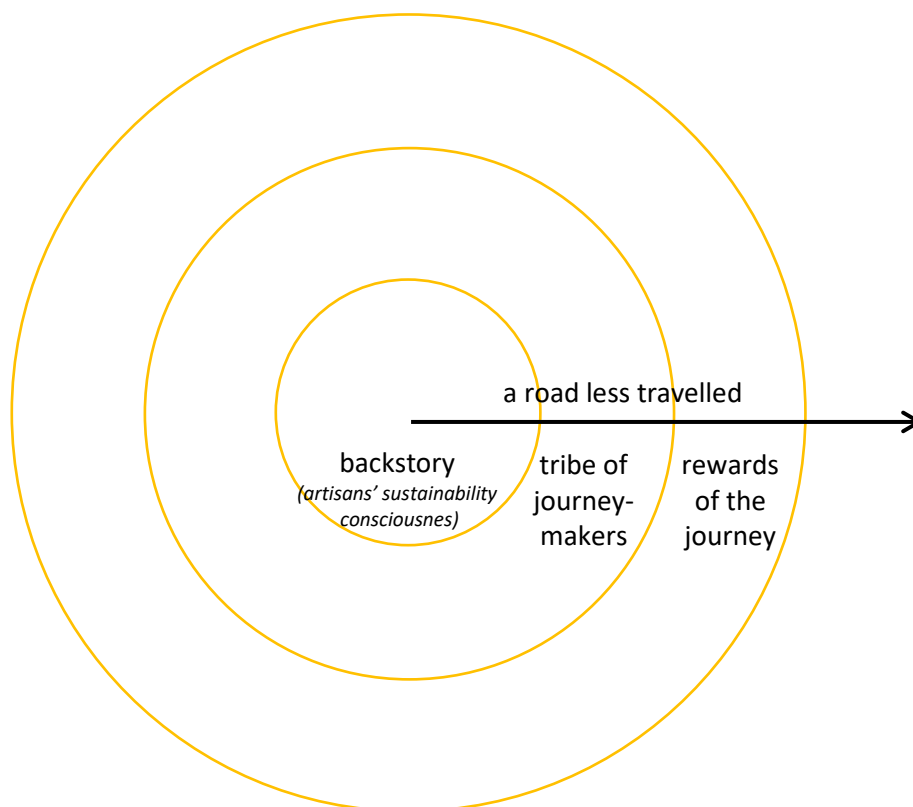
Thematic analysis revealed four overarching themes that capture the experiences of the participants interviewed in this research as they manoeuvre their sustainability-centric hospitality business models often against the tide of conventional business mores. The themes are not a beginning, middle or an end to sustainability operational success, as this order is not finite but a cyclic pattern of elements that were consistent across the data set. The themes generated were based on the research aim and the important question, “How do artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME?”

The first theme identified was their *backstory*. The *backstory* reflects the guiding force of the participants’ experiences that shaped their values and vision and drove their commitment to sustainability. The *backstory* theme creates the context, to demonstrate why the participants’ commitment to sustainability provides the fuel for, and prerequisite to, an increased likelihood of success when confronted with the obstacles in the second theme – *a road less travelled*. A *road less travelled* theme captures the difficulties the participants experienced because of their sustainability-centric and artisan-producing business models. How the participants as artisans operationalised sustainability is the focus of this research and is revealed in the third theme – *tribe of journey-makers*. This theme describes the participants negotiating a new road when the available one does not serve their commitment to sustainability. Essentially the participants, as impacted stakeholders, disrupted the status quo and transitioned from acting within the bounds of the sphere of influence (described previously in The Sphere of Influence, Section 2.3) to become innovative agents of change. The participants created a tribe of like-minded others, or a *tribe of journey-makers*, to overcome obstacles and enable sustainable practices to be upheld.

What the participants perceived as positive wins because of their business models, in the delivery of environmental, social, economic and personal satisfactions is expressed in the final theme – the *rewards of the journey*. The *rewards of the journey* theme, shows the benefits of the journey as operational outcomes and personal satisfactions perceived by participants because of their business model choice.

The themes that emerged were outside of what was expected at the onset of this research and are shown below in Figure 4 (Final thematic map). The significance of the artisan' sustainability consciousness is discussed in the *backstory* theme and reveals 'why' the artisans possessed such commitment to stay on *a road less travelled*. Figure 4 below shows the potency of the person(s) behind the business; the artisan, and their *backstory*, and therefore is represented at the core. *A road less travelled* is shown as the journey that starts at, and is driven from the core. *Tribe of journey-makers* is illustrated as the second circle and the theme discussion shows 'how' the artisans navigated the road. *Rewards of the journey* is illustrated as the final circle and positioned to demonstrate 'what' sustainable outcomes are realised by participants as a result of their journey.

#### How Hospitality Artisans Operationalise Sustainability in Their SME



**Figure 4. Final thematic map: Phase 6**

Final thematic map (Figure 4) illustrates how hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME. 'Why', 'how', and 'what' are important factors on the artisans' sustainable journey and are discussed in more detail using Sinek's (2009)

Golden Circle perspective (see Chapter 5). This chapter discusses the four themes, and their subthemes, in an order to depict the journey and interpret the reported experiences, perceptions and actions of the participants. Theme three is illustrated in more detail in the *tribe of journey-makers* (see Figure 5. Tribe of journey-makers).

The findings demonstrate that the artisan element offered a valuable dimension to the research, contributing numerous synergies to historical change-making attributes previously noted in the literature (e.g. British Library Board, 1841; Lucie-Smith, 1981; Perkins, 1989; Rock, 1998). For instance, the artisan and sustainability combination showcased favourable characteristics that correlated to entrepreneurial behaviours toward sustainable practice (Anderson, 1998; Parrish, 2010; Walley & Taylor, 2002). This will be elaborated further in the wider discussion of the research findings.

## **4.1 The Backstory**

The *backstory* theme evolved from the participants' personal histories, ideologies and experiences often divulged in reported stories that were nonetheless linked to information about their business model choice. What did become evident throughout the interviews was that most participants had a rationale – or *backstory* – that drove them to manage, purchase or create a sustainable SME. The participants' *backstories* also included the values that support their vision, offering an insight into what they want their world to look like and why. This first theme thereby creates a picture of the artisan character type, sitting at the centre of their SME, and providing the fuel to navigate their sustainable business on *a road less travelled*.

The participants had chosen to operationalise sustainability in their business models for a variety of reasons. All participants communicated a level of dissatisfaction with elements of the world they had experienced and each individual *backstory* appeared to be the fuel that drove them to take a sustainability-focused path. There was a combination of environmental, social, personal and family-driven *backstories* communicated by the participants. Significantly absent was any profit-driven rhetoric. Ultimately, something in the past had prompted the participants in this research to defy the traditional business status quo. The *backstory* finding revealed the link each

participant made between the past, their sustainability directive and their business model. This materialised as the participants' sustainability consciousness.

Through recounting their *backstories*, it was evident that some participants could not fathom an alternative, while others had transitioned into a new way of living and doing business. In terms of business start-up, one participant managed a long-standing enterprise created by an environmentally concerned community while another participant had purchased an existing business. However, most had incubated, developed and constructed the business from the ground up. As an example, the SME Zac managed supported a larger multi-faceted enterprise focused on sustainability stewardship, raising awareness of these issues through community engagement and education. This business is the result of a concerned community responding to the environmental degradation of their suburban area. The community of people responsible were referred to as the foundational members that drove the business with sustainable ideals. Clearly describing the common theme that emerged from the analysis, Zac explained:

There's kind of a backstory to everything that's done here (Zac).

Another participant explained her SME was born from a community of people wanting a central hub to enjoy music, like-minded social interactions and a place for their young families to play. Essentially the *backstory* of Bea's SME was a response to a social and community need over two decades ago:

It was either the old tavern or a tearoom. And we knew we wanted somewhere where we could go with our friends and family, the kids could come and play, you could have a beer or you could have a coffee. You could just hang out, [and] you'd hear some live music (Bea).

Another participant explained that the sociocultural era that was part of his *backstory* had informed and shaped his early awareness of environmental issues and this had impacted his thinking:

And I think it's probably a product of growing up in the 70s in the Bay area. I know it's because of that. Actually if I look back at it historically I could see what was happening there in the 70s. That's why it's finally starting to happen again now, you know. People are focusing on the sustainability as a way to reverse the bad changes before it can cause them to the planet (Matt).

Over half the participants assigned their sustainability ideologies to something deeply entrenched in their being and claimed to have always lived a 'green' life, Matt explained:

It's something that I've always, as far as I can remember, I've always believed in (Matt).

Two participants asserted sustainability was part of who they were and linked this to the conditioning in their family of origin. This self-evaluation was significant, as it indicated sustainability was more than just a business model but something deeply entrenched in the individual. Both had built their SMEs over a quarter of a century ago using back-to-basics building technology, complemented with recycled and reused construction products, essentially demonstrating that they 'walked the talk'. Jay's interview quote captured this:

It seemed obvious to me that nature was precious, and that man takes too much, and that has just carried on really. Yeah, my sister [X] she, you know, we, did those things together, and it just carried on being important in our lives (Jay).

Other participants had changed the course of their lives and created hospitality businesses to satisfy their sustainability-focused objectives for themselves and their families. For example, Olly had transitioned from a career in corporate environmental regulation because she wanted a sustainable business and lifestyle for her family that was environmentally safe and future-proof:

We don't want to be around sprays, and also we want a piece of land that's going to be prosperous for generations. So that's basically ... organics falls into that. So creating activity and land that is healthy and sustainable (Olly).

Similarly, Pat had held prestigious chef positions internationally, but chose to move back to his roots in rural New Zealand to build a hospitality offering that embraced a more simple approach to food, its origins and the basic principles of production. A desire for a more uncomplicated approach to food and its production was expressed by all participants in this study. Pat's quote captured the prevailing consensus:

Our sort of philosophy is that everyone can and should eat well and it shouldn't cost them a fortune ... food shouldn't be elitist ... that's why I find it quite incredible that anyone can be sort of hungry when there's something as basic as, you know, dragging up a cabbage. I mean, yeah, these are fundamentals that people have just forgotten (Pat).

All the participants articulated strong views about the things in their world they perceived as counter to sustainability progress and communicated values and a long-term lens towards the future they wanted to help create. The values of the participants or the people behind the SMEs was another notable element that was consistently reported as driving and guiding the businesses forward. Zac and Matt's quotes attested to the importance of values in the *backstory* finding:

The values are driven by the actual principle[s] of this business of what we are (Zac).

I mean, I wouldn't want to be in business any other way. Personally. If we can get the prevailing consensus to be that we want humanity to exist, and co-exist, then yeah... (Matt).

All owner participants referred to their values as something intertwined in the consciousness of their SME. This was evident irrespective of whether the SME was a start-up or an existing enterprise. Carl described why he chose to purchase an organic, Fairtrade artisan coffee SME:

I was attracted to it because it had a wholesome natural sustainable sort of value set attached to it, and I wanted to build on that. So we were ahead of the curve as far as sustainability went. We were already committed to the principles of sustainability before sustainability became a buzz word (Carl).

The participants' value currency was expressed beyond traditional business rhetoric and profit-centred discussion. The concept of value was communicated by participants as a desire for improved social well-being and environmental harm reduction. The genuine intention in Pat's quote demonstrated an action toward employees' well-being, customer education, and this showcased how Pat's values were intertwined in his SME:

I[t's] kind of incomprehensible and incompatible to run a business in conflict with your own personal values. I want to do a good job without cutting corners, provide healthy food, a safe working environment, an environment with a great culture, free of a lot of negativities. I want my staff to be proud of where they work, what they serve and what they eat themselves. I want my customers to see how easy and how delicious food can be. You know if you just take simple steps it's not hard and its really achievable (Pat).

Many of the participants spoke about shared values across lifestyle, family and business. All identified a value currency beyond self, perhaps on a socially conscious scale: to a customer through their experience, as an improvement to the environment, or through waste reduction. Jay's quote demonstrated this:

That was the rationale right from the beginning ... we wanted to live and work from home together... at something that we enjoyed and where people knew they were somewhere different. And I mean as the day to day - I mean what you see in the café now after 25 years - is quite different from when we started, but a lot of the sort of ... certainly the sustainability aims are still the same. Because it's about efficiency really, and most sort of, I guess, eco-technology or whatever you want to call it is actually, yeah, is about efficiency. But not having waste is efficient (Jay).

As another example of shared values, one respondent was part of a large family of vintners, chefs and others working together in a multi-generational hospitality offering in rural New Zealand. Like so many of the participants in this study the venue was built from the beginning with a sustainability focus and artisan product intention from inception. The potency of values is captured in this quote by Wendy:

I just think naturally they're important values to the whole family. I know with my in-laws [X] and [X] who started this whole thing, bought the land in the 80s you know and it was nothing. They're very non-wasteful people. You know they sort of built this up

from scratch. And worked really hard to do it. You know, yeah it's not like they sort of came from a big family with lots of money and just did it. You know they really built it up. And just had, I think they have a real attitude of not wasting things. We all care about the environment, and we all love eating good food from the environment (Wendy).

Participants consistently identified what they did not like about their perception of the world and were active in doing things differently. In conjunction with each individual claim, participants would then state their values as a binary opposite to their unique dissatisfactions. As artisans, they consistently expressed an innate desire to control their production and could reason why. The back-to-basics value was constantly alluded to, whether it was about food origins, untampered food production or a gravitation to a less-complex world of the past. Olly's quote demonstrated this well:

Then we just have this really strong value about being real. Because there's so much fluff in the world. In this day and age. Disposable material objects. And processed food ... It's only been a phenomenon I think for 70 years after World War II (Olly).

Their values and their unique and defining *backstories* were also supported with a vision for their future. This demonstrated they understood and had a grasp on the long term necessity of securing a sustainable future beyond themselves. The following quotes captured the importance of looking ahead and why it matters:

So when you think long term, yeah, thinking long term helps you, you know, plan to do something that really matters (Olly).

So the whole business is really focused around the whole sustainable site ... It needs to really come to being what the kind of the vision of the whole valley, which is kind of urban ecology (Zac).

Consistently, the participants communicated their vision with the social and environmentally biased rhetoric mentioned previously. Subsequently, their visions extended well beyond the traditional business pursuit of financial outcomes. Each participant's unique vision went beyond mere description, and they each demonstrated actions in support of their vision. Carl's quote reflects the true cost of a sustainability

vision and alludes to the entrepreneurial characteristics required to pursue a sustainable business model:

I have sacrificed and, you know, made personal sacrifices to follow my vision. And so that's a risk as well. So yeah, financial, personal and that's how I would dig deeper into that. Perseverance. (Carl).

The participants had all mapped out their vision ahead. Some were precise, with accompanying plans of action, and expected outcomes, like garden expansion, increased self-sufficiency and continued viability of the SME as a sustainable business. This further demonstrated that the participants' were action- and results-focused as well as mindful of the long journey ahead. Olly and Jay's quotes below captured their vision:

But we'll be more sustainable so we'll have more depth. We'll have hopefully more vegetable gardens. Because we only do little kitchen gardens. Because we run out of time, we don't have enough staff so we look forward to having more prosperity and systems to enable us to farm our own vegetables more. So that's a real goal in the future (Olly).

So those green technologies that we're using and eco sort of systems are embedded in the business, so they'll just carry on anyway. But as far as the sustainability of the business, the viability of it long term, because it's integral to our life you know it's next door. That we need to keep fresh. And find ways that as we get older we can still enjoy it (Jay).

Providing work in the local communities was included in the vision of over the half the participants in this study. Participants reported this with both pride and a level of responsibility, acknowledging their SME as a past and future provider of work for their local communities. Bea's quote succinctly demonstrates how her vision (fuelled by a potent *backstory*) for a community-centric hospitality SME continues to cultivate her long-lens towards a sustainable future. Bea aligned her social values of providing for her local community to her vision:

I don't know if you can hear the little voices in there now but that's one of the guys in the brewery ... he met an English girl and they've been together for eight years and

they've got two little kids now. And [X] does some office work and then she's doing a couple of nights in the bar. And those kids are growing up here. And you know they'll be working here soon (Bea).

Further, when the participants communicated their vision, it was frequently done with a level of positivity and optimism. As an example, the vision of some participants was less focused on a specific plan, they were confident and upbeat about their ability to action progress, and were very excited about the potential outcomes. Pat's quote demonstrated the level of enthusiasm and excitement toward a positive future:

You know we tend to shift things pretty quickly, although it seems to take forever and, you know, I'm just looking forward to the next you know ... I look at the changes that we're going to make in the next year. You know, week on week, five years from now, ten years from now you know ... holy crap you know it, you know there's some good stuff coming (Pat).

All saw their SME improving and continuing well into the future and had considered the necessary actions to ensure the longevity of their business. Ultimately, participants communicated with a high degree of earnestness and a belief that their actions had the capacity to disrupt the status quo and impel sustainability-focused change from the bottom-up. Pat and Carl's quotes captured the spirit of this mindset:

I think the more you make something exciting and sustainable the norm that's how you can change the world. You don't change it by sitting back doing nothing and waiting for someone else to do it and sipping on your Coca-Cola hoping that some other person's going to save the boat, when it's filling full of water (Pat).

I believe that if you're going to do business you should do good business. You know like I think that someone's got to take a sustainable approach to business. And what we really need to do is mainstream sustainability into business. So the only way we can do that is by showing that a business can be sustainable, ethical and successful, you know. That's really important (Carl).

In summary, all of the participants articulated a unique *backstory*, and their values and vision were all framed through a softer-value laden lens aligned to the sustainability

mandate prescribed in the WCED's Brundtland report (1987). Some claimed to have always lived a pro-sustainability life, while others could not fathom living in conflict with their sustainability ideals. The assertions expressed by the participants echo the claims made in the Tzschentke *et al.*'s (2008) 'path to greenness' study characterising sustainability warriors. Critically, as identified by Anderson (1998), researchers must understand an individual's value lens beyond conventional thought, because an individual's value currency outside of economic agendas as acknowledged by (Willard, 2012) is likely mirrored in their SME action. The participants' value currency consistently extended beyond themselves and their SME, demonstrating an attention to sustainability's triple bottom line objectives described by Elkington (1999). The participants showcased examples of socially and environmentally value-driven behaviours that were consistent with the sustainability literature (e.g. Buckley, 2012; Elkington, 1999; WCED, 1987; Willard, 2012). Their vision was long-sighted and, as a pocket of humanity, in contrast to Stubbings (2009) claims of short-sightedness and disregarding of future generations. The participants communicated their vision in ways that demonstrated their deep understanding of the long journey necessary to progress change.

The *backstories*, values and vision of participants were consistently expressed in revolt of their perceived discords with the current status of the world. For example, man takes too much (Jay), dislikes waste (Wendy), worried about planet (Matt), and concern regarding, sprays, processed foods and the well-being of future generations (Olly). Other insights included, environmental degradation of the local area (Zac), and people losing sight of food basics, going hungry and business practices outside of personal values (Pat).

Most significantly, the value of the artisan and their sustainable consciousness revealed in the *backstory* theme illustrates a source of pressure outside of hospitality resource scarcity, rising costs discussions that dominate the literature (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Jauhari & Verma, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). The artisans' sustainability consciousness has perhaps been underestimated in the literature as a potent driver toward sustainability business action. This is reminiscent of historic artisan responses to socio-temporal injustices, and this finding is of critical

importance to this research. The intentions and actions of artisan participants in this research can be paralleled to the change-making behaviours of their historic namesakes reported in the literature (British Library Board, 1841; Lucie-Smith, 1981; Rock, 1998). This finding therefore reveals a potent individual driving change at the core of the hospitality SMEs in this research. Pat's quote captured this:

If you want to change the world, you know, you need to get off your arse and do it (Pat).

The *backstory* theme identified the participants' sustainability consciousness and illustrated 'why' the participants' perceived they had one. Critically, the artisans' sustainability consciousness provided the solid foundation and starting point to fuel the journey on *a road less travelled*.

## **4.2 A Road Less Travelled**

The theme *a road less travelled* which emerged from the data analysis corresponded to the participants' challenges and choices along their journey to sustainable practice. This theme was identified through their perspective as business owners and managers and, consequently, as impacted stakeholders within the sphere of influence. Specifically, this theme reveals participants' reports of higher costs, customer relationship issues, hospitality industry status quo, the disconnect with education providers, and the lack of trust and stifling policies of regulatory bodies. These five sub-themes represent the sphere of influence and emerged as the inhibiting factors perceived by participants because of their artisanal and sustainability business models. All participants identified an array of enabling factors from within the sphere of influence and demonstrated the benefits to their SMEs. The inhibitors are reported in this theme to demonstrate the difficulties participants experienced on their journey towards sustainable practice.

Within their sustainable business journey, increased cost was identified as an inhibitor by participants and was framed as financial, and/or, time and hardship. Increased compliance and certification costs relating to sustainability and artisan production and growing were mentioned by all of the participants. Their concern extended beyond the

impact to themselves, their staff, and their businesses and is illustrated in the following quotes:

There are costs with that, you know significant costs. Compliance, compliance costs relating to sustainability can be a major inhibitor for some operators (Carl).

Many growers can't afford to be certified. And I think that's the main reason to be honest (Olly).

I found all that to be really pretty hard for a small business. Especially, and especially start up. It's more expensive to do it this way, unfortunately (Matt).

Participants communicated there was an increased financial cost that perhaps their more traditional business counterparts did not experience. Matt articulated this in particular, perhaps because of the SME status and small production attributes:

The thing about small producers again is hard to get [X] certification; I mean it's not hard it's just expensive (Matt).

The extra time involved was noted by all participants in some way. The concept of time as a cost was often communicated in conjunction with the added hardship the participants encountered on *a road less travelled*. Jay captured this in the following quote:

It's possible, but it is definitely more work. And ... the time is a cost (Jay).

Again, this type of cost was acknowledged beyond the impact to themselves and considered as an added difficulty for their staff. Pat and Matt identified this:

It's hard ... I mean it just takes time, you know. And it takes care from people work, working with us, working for us (Pat).

A lot harder. Yeah, it's a lot more work. It's... a lot more management for me and for my team (Matt).

The cost factor is demonstrated in Pat's quote, alongside a level of distaste towards his perception of the current status quo. Again, the binary opposite was a key indicator in uncovering the impact of navigating *a road less travelled*:

I think because we take the whole animal rather than just cuts, it slows down ... slows us down a wee bit in terms of even though we're very busy it slows [us] down. I guess that mentality of you just buy the prime bits and, and do the lazy [thing] and kind of cook. And just seal it both sides and flick it out, and, and you know it's very easy to have a factory mentality (Pat).

The findings testify to the increased costs, extra time and difficulties apparent in a hospitality business model that operationalises sustainable and artisanal elements. The increased costs were at times perceived by participants as inhibitors specific to *a road less travelled*. These included financial costs, and increased difficulty and workload for participants and staff in a move to counter these inhibitors.

Another concern for the participants was the added customer relationship issues because of their business model. The participants acknowledged the customer-centric nature of hospitality, and their responsibility as hosts. Olly and Jay captured this:

Hospitality people want their customers to eat really well. Like as a general, as a generous starting point (Olly).

And we're expecting our customers to drive here (Jay).

Although Jay noted the paradox of supply and demand, somewhat oxymoronicly:

And the foreign tourists are flying in from all round the world. None of that's sustainable (Jay).

Many participants felt customers were naïve when it came to sustainability and artisan products. A customer's ability to identify authentication of a trademark was mentioned by Carl:

The consumer doesn't know ... the consumer just thinks that Fair Trade and Trade Aid and all of those words around aid are all the same. So they don't know that we're actually being very transparent because we have ... we've been third party audited; we have third party verification (Carl).

Olly felt customers were poorly informed when considering their food choices:

But people don't realise that they're not eating real food. They're not shopping in the fresh air... everything is fake (Olly).

Two participants with composting toilets suggested some customers were confronted with the reality of sustainability when it was made personal to their experience. Jay identified the challenge to his customers' comfort, naivety and price point:

A composting toilet ... as well and that, I know that that's a challenge for some people. You know it's not a cheap place to stay and it's like. That's ... actually sustainable; it's not going away somewhere, you're not giving it to somebody else to look after. It's ... your response; we're taking responsibility for it you know (Jay).

The value customers calibrated from the hospitality offering as a niche product and the price they were prepared to pay was a point of discussion for most participants. Matt elaborated on this point:

You can't make it unaffordable. Because we live in this society where there's ... it's a generally a low wage society that we live in, you know. We don't want to price ourselves out of people's pockets (Matt).

Participants were very aware of the importance of generating a customer base and demand for their niche SME offering. Carl summed up this understanding:

And you've actually built, until you've built a critical mass of customers who want your product. Because in order to be a trailblazer in sustainability you've got to have customers (Carl).

The customers' expectations across price point, value, comfort and satisfaction were paramount to the participants and the customers' naivety was noted. The participants perceived they had a responsibility as host to inform their customers of issues particular to their business model. At times the participants were hindered and the sustainability objectives of the SME were difficult to deliver. However, participants were aware of the importance of the customer as a stakeholder impacting the success of their SME.

Indeed, mechanisms to elevate popularity were welcomed by all participants and there was a perception that normalising sustainability within the hospitality industry was a potent means of gaining momentum. Matt captured the essence of this belief:

You see it, too, in a lot of the other people in the industry [who are] now are doing it just as normal. So that's good. That means it's a market, and everybody's really vocal about it. I mean I don't care if it becomes trendy; I want it to become trendy. As trendy as possible. I only look at that as it will actually help us get, generate business (Matt).

However, while all of the participants recognised the benefits of increased industry response, they demonstrated a more sophisticated reasoning towards pro-sustainability rather than just as a means to generate business. The industry as whole – and the businesses within it – generally was not perceived as active in the move towards sustainability. In some way, participants made a point of distancing themselves and their SME from their somewhat negative perception of the hospitality industry status quo. The main points of concern surrounded the responsibility concerning the social and environmental impact the industry needs to consider. One participant voiced the industry's apathy as a whole, and another commented on the responsibility of business behaviour:

Hospitality for a long time has dragged the chain (Carl).

So to not grab on to it, to try and just capitalise on the fact that it's not legislated, I think that's terribly irresponsible. As a business, as a business person. Yeah, yeah, we're in a country that's stable enough, you know, and that is prosperous enough that you can make those [green] choices (Matt).

Most of the participants commented on the industry's attitude to the exploitation and treatment of staff. This type of comment was often countered with their differentiated behaviour, as demonstrated by Matt and Pat:

We're trying to be more conscious of the fact that this industry is riddled with a bit of that, you know, taking advantage of people ... for some people it is a career so, you know, trying to make sure they're taken care of (Matt).

And can't just burn people out. Well you can but, you know it ... it's just like the same cycle and it's just too hard (Pat).

Negative comments questioning the 'culture' of socially irresponsible behaviours within the industry were frequently marked with an acknowledgement that expectations were changing, and old practices were being challenged. This indicated that the participants were aware of new ways of thinking and they would often enthusiastically leverage their more socially-responsible behaviour against their perceived industry shortcomings. Pat and Zac demonstrated this:

Young people have got different expectations on what you want them to do and go through. You know, saying what we used to go through 20 years ago, you know it just isn't going to happen (Pat).

I came from an old way of working in hospitality to a new way of working which is we learn together. I'm not going to stand here and yell at you; there's no yelling in this building (Zac).

Alongside criticisms of the industry's exploitation of human capital, the multiple streams of waste the industry was responsible for was also identified. Matt and Zac captured this assessment:

That's a big one I think, especially because restaurants tend to generate so much waste product (Matt).

Like the big caterers, they're big wasters of food and produce you know (Zac).

The participants identified a range of waste beyond the obvious waste streams identified in the literature, to the less-publicised reality of grey water and customer effluent. More specifically, the participants, as responsible members of the greater industry, were concerned about the environmental impact of their SME. While all participants in some way expressed a dissatisfaction towards the industry's response to sustainability, they repeatedly, and without invitation, offered insight into ways they took responsibility for their environmental impact. Jay, Wendy and Bea's quotes demonstrated methods they used to recycle, reduce and reuse waste:

We pump our own water and get rid of our own waste water. We've got a red bed for the grey water. Again all the compost goes, from the toilets goes through [and] the compost gets used back on the land (Jay).

We have a got a bottle crushing thing for all the empty wine bottles. It makes them into tiny little bits of glass. And we've been using that around, we use that like in the garden and in the carpark and stuff (Wendy).

And then the liquid drains through that through the toilet. And so we get, you know, bulk urine. And that goes into a tank which gets distributed around the orchard as well (Bea).

Like many of their peers, sustainable initiatives were often reported alongside the benefit rendered. Jay and Bea commented on the compost that was generated from waste and distributed around the gardens and orchards. Wendy's bottle crushing initiative generated sand and grit for on-site gardens and the customer carpark.

The education of suitably equipped personnel feeding into the industry was another area discussed in this study. A disconnect with education providers was evident across the data set. Whilst the reasons varied, the findings demonstrated that participants just did not consider education providers as a source of potential employees to fit their business model. What is involved in turning theory into practice remains a long-standing debate and this was identified as a real-life issue for the SMEs. It is illustrated in Pat's quote:

I think whilst they're certainly coming out of polytechnic much more mentally prepared when they come ... to the actual reality of doing it, you know, it's that transition of theory to practicality (Pat).

Participants did not appear to know if sustainability was included in the hospitality education curriculum, who the providers were, and did not appear to look to providers for recruitment. Carl and Matt's quote demonstrated this:

You know I don't know who's educating them. I don't know where they're being educated (Carl).

It hasn't been my experience, but we haven't had a lot of people come out. We haven't hired a lot of people from [polytechnic institute] (Matt).

One participant was unaware of the level of training of graduates and implied that while new trainees may be of a quality standard and have sustainability knowledge, she felt the rural location of her SME may deter applicants enquiring after a position:

Living in the country we don't quite get that calibre of new trainees. But, but ... so we haven't had anyone directly from a tertiary ... education (Olly).

Critically, the lack of communication between education providers and industry was evident. Although one participant offered evidence of employing students and graduates, the employees' ability to implement sustainability in a practical environment was marked as very limited. Whilst Zac's quote suggests the students embraced sustainability in theory and enjoyed it in practice, their knowledge and what they contributed to the organisation in a sustainability context was not well-regarded:

They're really interested in it [sustainability] and they're really stoked we're doing it, but they really don't know much about it themselves. And they're like, 'Oh that's really good, I really like that.' But they're not offering any assistance or any help. They're only doing what the boss tells them to do, but then they're not pushing back. They're, they're taking it on and enjoying it so, yeah (Zac).

This example demonstrates that graduates were observed as being ill-equipped to implement or maintain operational sustainability practice. However, of more concern was the disjoint between the educator providers and industry actors. This was raised as a real issue for reasons unique to each SME in this study.

The lack of cohesion between SME participants and other relevant stakeholders considered important in the sphere of influence was obvious in the findings. This extended to the participants' relationship with regulatory bodies. The lack of trust and the stifling policies of regulatory bodies were areas most commented upon by the participants. All the interviewees at some point were complimentary of the regulatory bodies, in particular the sustainability business-facilitating orientated ones. Three participants acknowledged favourable attributes of the regulatory bodies and relied on them for social media, courses and systemised branding, and marked them as relevant and important in the move towards sustainability. The mechanisms offered for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, branding and influencing change were identified and appeared to be used more readily in city areas. Matt and Zac captured this:

We do work with the [two sustainability networking agencies]. Those are two big ones. They do run a lot of courses and classes and things like that (Matt).

I mean that's basically why we've got all the [names sustainability stewardship brand] because we looked at their kind of system. There's not really any other systems in New Zealand like it (Zac).

Whilst some of these initiatives were favourably reported, it was not the main focus of this research, and does not demonstrate the overall perception toward regulatory bodies. Sustainability business-facilitating agencies were regarded with respect in this study; regulatory bodies in this research are inferred more so in consideration of the legislative and policy-making stakeholders. Distrust was mentioned enough times to raise a red flag on this issue across participants. The policies, the reliability of those policies, and the long-term intentions of regulatory bodies were at times regarded with scepticism and doubt. Wendy and Pat's questioning demonstrated this:

So, you know we pay a lot of money to recycle basically. Yeah, and get it all picked up, and then you know you don't even know if, what's actually happening with your bit. If they recycle it anyway (Wendy).

And, and if you go in the wheelie bin [i.e. recycling bin] you'll be taken away too (Pat).

While some participants commented on specific areas of concern, others focused on the bigger picture. A common thread that demonstrated a lack of respect and reliance on regulators was prevalent across the data set. While the participants' actions aligned to their visions for a more sustainable future, they often framed others in the sphere of influence as a binary opposite to how they viewed themselves. For example, Olly stated:

I just think you just have to have a long ... just think in the long term. Like I'm noticing it with everything at the moment, everyone's thinking short-term gain. Like politicians (Olly).

Short-sightedness from others in the sphere of influence was inferred multiple times and a number of participants questioned some regulatory bodies ability to enforce an ethical standard. The weak policies and the integrity of the mark were also treated with a degree of suspicion. Olly captured this:

So there's a huge difference. Because I feel like sustainability is justified by just trying to do your best (Olly).

Further to this, with respect to organic and fair-trade certification, Olly and Carl's perception of other certification labels demonstrated some of the reasoning behind the distrust:

Anyone can say they're sustainable and, but no one [except those certified] can say they're organic. Under the law now. Whereas you can say sustainable [and] you're not going to get in breach of anything. If you say you're sustainable. Yeah, that's difference. So it's bandied about. It's really annoying, that greenwashing issue (Olly).

And so, they have to maintain the integrity of the mark. And make sure that whoever has that mark on their product is truly organic and fair trade (Carl).

Consequently, the term ‘greenwashing’ was mentioned in a literal sense by Olly and Jay. This phenomenon was perceived as a ploy, as a paradox to practice or as an inauthentic mechanism to deliver traditional business objectives and outcomes. Jay explained:

We’re not accredited or anything like that because it’s, it just seems like too much greenwash really. Because it’s not being sustainable because we’re ... because we’re using fossil fuels all over the place (Jay).

Greenwashing is a label attached to the action of spending more on sustainability branding than implementing it in practice. It is identified by some participants as their reason to reject regulation. The following quote from Pat articulates the misalignment of values, vision and ideologies, and the concerning level of disrespect and distrust towards regulatory bodies:

I would have a national cohesive policy on waste. It’s very hodgepodge and down to individual councils and it’s very unhelpful. In a small, linear country I find it incredible that four million people can’t sort their shit out to get rid of. If the country was your house you would sort it out and make it happen. Instead of shifting responsibility off [onto] the other people and taking the cheap option why don’t you do the right option and be the country, you know run the country along the lines that you want it to be in the sound bytes and the snapchats. You want this country to be progressive and modern and green so why don’t you make decisions to make sure that across the board starting with waste management that we are everything that. Not just what’s that sound byte they use (Pat).

Regulation that stifled the artisan and small-production attributes of the SMEs was another area criticised by the participants. They felt regulation was counterproductive to the progression of their sustainable business models and ideals. The following quote demonstrated this sentiment:

If you want to create a dynamic environment for food and hospitality you need to be careful that you don’t stifle that with too much regulation. It’s one thing keeping people safe, it’s another thing from keeping them wrapped in cotton wool (Pat).

Most interestingly, they were concerned about the impact on themselves, and other artisans and small-production enterprises, and the perceived adverse effect short-sighted regulation could have on regional and national clean-food branding and sustainability. Pat described how small producers could potentially be regulated out of the market and questioned how consumers distinguish food value:

A little old lady with free-range eggs that are gorgeous, you know, isn't able to produce a consumer statement. And be audited, you know. Like, isn't the point more about having ... and serving the produce rather than getting a sticker on the wall (Pat).

The participants also demonstrated a desire to showcase local and national flavours. Regional flavours were part of their SME narrative; they felt inhibited by regulation, and they exhibited a strong desire to be part of the New Zealand food tourism story. Some participants predicted this level of perceived stifling by regulation could impact the greater New Zealand tourism product, as explained by Olly and Bea:

That kind of part of regulation is frustrating. You know you can have the most fresh and organic food, and you know your land well, and you know your environment well, but you can't do it under the law. It's just the fact that we can't get the real food that grows around us. Like, you know, in France. You eat regional food. And we're trying to do that here. I just think there needs to be an understanding .... you know ... they need to take into account the importance of national identity and creating a strong food tourism (Olly).

We've got it right here, and I mean it's good to develop a New Zealand style as well (Bea).

Developing food styles as national identity and as artisan small-producers was clearly important to the participants of this research. A number of participants captured the artisans' ideologies. Carl's quote identified the artisan as an entrepreneur:

To be an artisanal, sustainable business you need to be focused on being a specialist and an innovator within that (Carl).

The value of the small-producer and the potential impact to a society's well-being, so frequently described in the literature, was also identified. Pat's quote demonstrated this as he looked toward a preferred future by contrasting the corporate alternative and reflecting back into what he perceived as old-world culinary history:

And you look at where potential problems are in the food supply. If you want to create a dynamic food supply you need to encourage its small, artisan producers which are on the cutting edge that influence the major cultural values of a country. It's not the Goodman Fielders and frozen Watties peas and corn that make a country like France great. It's individual farmers doing wonderful products that people go away and think of for the rest of their lives (Pat).

Sustainability, artisan and small-production remained central ideologies and operational factors in all the SMEs' niche offerings. Participants felt frustrated and suppressed by the artisan-esque characteristics across their entire business model. *A road less travelled* demonstrated the participants' experiences of inhibiting factors perceived by a compliance-dominant sphere of influence.

The participants reported they were susceptible to higher costs because of their sustainability business model. When compared to findings reported in the wider literature, similar conclusions can be drawn. Like Tuppen (2012) and Sloan *et al.* (2013) the participants acknowledged sustainability incurred more financial costs. The additional time demands identified by Deloitte (2010) and increased hardship marked by other academics (e.g. Buckley, 2012; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Deloitte, 2010; Hunter, 1995; Millar, 2012; Parker, 2011) were noted in the findings as very relevant cost issues for the participants. According to the Ethical Corporation (2015), there is a positive correlation between financial spend and sustainability integrity in business. If this is considered alongside the higher costs discussed in this theme, the participants compared favourably. Critically, it was clear that these added costs were not a sufficient deterrent to move the participants off their sustainability-focused path.

*A road less travelled* also created some customer relationship issues that revealed some interesting findings. Participants felt customers were naïve about sustainability products and this finding is contradictory to claims that customers are increasingly sophisticated

(Deucher, 2012; Murray & O'Neill, 2012). While Withiam (2011) and Zhang *et al.* (2012) suggested customers' sustainability-conscious demands do not necessarily match their spending habits, the participants recognised the cost barrier but were not deterred by this challenge. According to participants, customer naivety made it difficult to leverage their offering and deliver value, but they also recognised customers as a valuable conduit to change.

Consistent with the literature (e.g. Deloitte, 2010; Sloan *et al.*, 2009) the industry was also acknowledged as a potential and potent change-driver in the findings, with participants describing pro-sustainability progress with increased industry traction. However, the participants described a hospitality industry status-quo, consistent with the sluggish industry response described in the literature (e.g. Buckley, 2012; Deloitte, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000). Sustainability requires a social consciousness (Buckley, 2012; Elkington, 1999; Faux, 2005; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Hart, 1997; Robert & Cohen, 2002; Stubbings, 2009; WCED, 1987; Willard, 2012) and participants spoke of the need for a recalibrated industry attitude to the exploitation and treatment of staff. Further, the literature describes hospitality as an industry that generates a lot of waste (Deloitte, 2010; Melissen, 2013; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). The participants all acknowledged the multiple streams of waste apparent in the industry as a whole and more specifically due to the more hands-on reality of sustainability management. The environmental impact of their SME as part of the industry was a concern for all participants. The range of waste reported was enlightening and the micro-scale view promoted by Wilbanks (2003) substantiated the benefits of these claims with a detailed reality of the problems within the individual SMEs. Examples of this included the reality of managing human waste (Bea and Jay), the extent of glass use (Wendy), and the difficulty and reliability of responsible rubbish collection (Pat and Wendy). What became most relevant was that participants acknowledged the environmental and social responsibility of their industry, noted the apathy, and were eager to distance themselves from the current state of things and find new ways of behaving.

The literature also indicated that educational providers are important stakeholders within the sphere of influence (Baum, 2006; Deale *et al.*, 2009; Millar, 2012; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) yet the findings demonstrate a marked disconnect with education providers.

Aligned to the observations of some academics (e.g. Buckley 2012; Sharpley, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009) participants identified the potential problems in transitioning between theory and practice. Consistent with the literature the students' ability to implement sustainability had proved very limited in the only example offered (Hunter, 1995; Millar, 2012; Parker, 2011; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). While the literature maintains sustainability in hospitality is an important issue (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Deloitte, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Myung *et al.*, 2012), participants agreed with views (i.e. Millar, 2012; Parker, 2011; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) that educators did not provide suitable graduates to meet this growing expectation. As a result, participants did not appear to even consider educational providers as a resource for suitable staff recruitment to fit their business model. The lack of communication between the industry participants in this research and education providers was a relevant finding and highlights perhaps some missed opportunities for both parties. However, and more importantly perhaps, this did illuminate that practical sustainability knowledge was coming from somewhere other than educational providers.

Lack of trust and the stifling policies of regulatory bodies represent the last finding in this theme. While the literature claims large hotels may employ sustainability accreditation for branding (Deloitte, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2009) and to demonstrate formal compliance (Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Segara-Ona *et al.*, 2014) this was not the predominant finding in this research. Three of the SMEs demonstrated a level of trust with regulatory bodies and, similar to Deloitte's (2010) claims, identified an array of benefits because of their affiliation. Whilst outside the bounds of this research, it is worth mentioning that the three SMEs located in the city appeared potentially more likely to partner with regulatory bodies, and more positive about this relationship, than their rural counterparts. However, trust was an issue and is relevant to the findings. The lacklustre intention towards sustainability and the integrity of the mark were treated with a degree of suspicion. This is consistent with the literature marking weak policies of 'best practice' as a probable inhibitor to uptake (Siorak *et al.*, 2015; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). It was interesting to note this view was echoed by most participants, for example, policy and penalties weak (Olly), concern for integrity of mark (Carl), and greenwashing (Jay). However, although participants questioned authenticity, lack of legislation and substandard policies did not deter their sustainable

action. Some academics have questioned large hotels' sustainability claims and noted greenwashing ploys (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sloan *et al.*, 2009). However, participants in this study consistently viewed and referred to sustainability ploys as a paradox, and were keen to distance themselves from inauthentic claims. Their counteractions are demonstrated in the next theme, *tribe of journey-makers*.

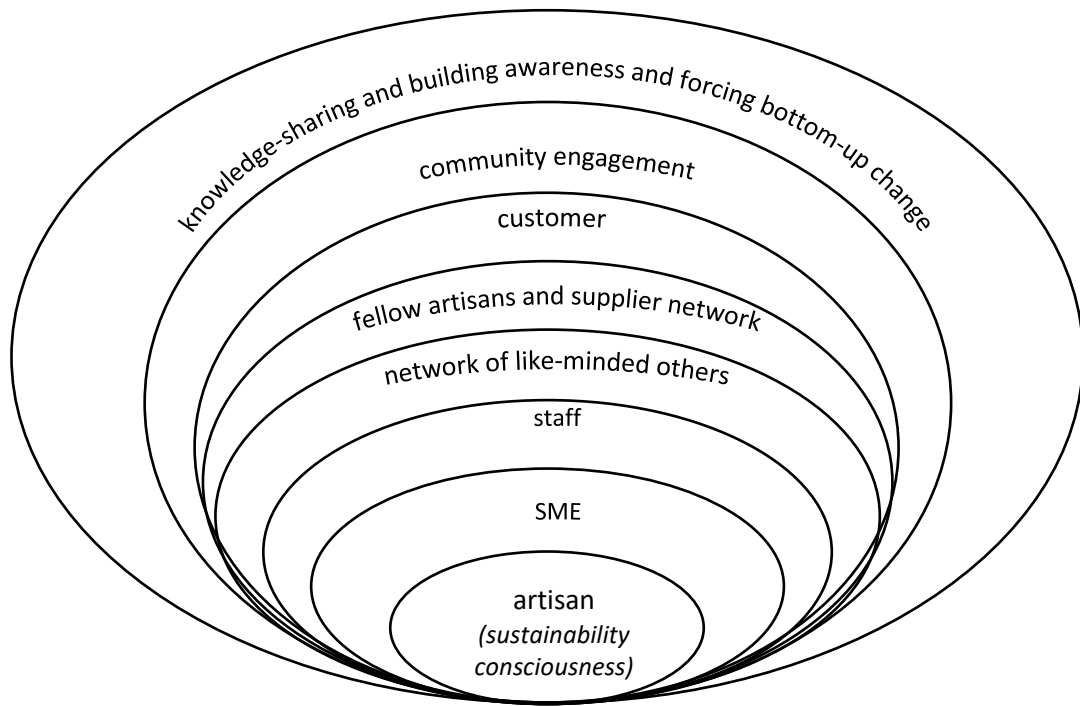
The literature suggests that large hotels not only trust the regulating bodies, but relies on them for sustainability credibility. Prior research testifies to this partnering (e.g. Deloitte, 2010; Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Segara-Ona *et al.*, 2014; Sloan *et al.*, 2013) yet the findings of this research appear to contrast this claim. Participants criticised regulators for policies that stifled artisans and small-producers congruent with the findings of academics over governance observations (Mathers, 2011; Schindler, 2012). Finding niche areas is critical to business success (Schaper & Volery, 2004) especially with artisan enthusiasts becoming a growing population (Douglas, & Martin, 2012; Garcia-Bryce, 2005; Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Rock, 1998; Waldman & Kerr, 2015), and central to the SME offering. This was a major issue for the participants.

Although Morris (2009) questioned the interests of the modern artisan voice, all participants in this study valued the artisan ideology as a small producer, felt inhibited, and desired change, as characterised and identified by pro-artisan academics (e.g. Howell, 1996; Perkins, 1989; Rock, 1998) celebrating their positive and influential role in history. Therefore, the impact this growing cluster of innovators have and could have on the individual, food system, society in New Zealand and the greater tourism product must be considered. While participants challenged the current mainstream hospitality business model, their experiences, in this theme, revealed the difficulties and frustrations of their choice. Examples included political short-sightedness inhibiting national food identity (Olly); disjointed national waste policy (Pat); and the costs of compliance (Matt). Importantly, they felt their role in pursuing change was not facilitated nor acknowledged by influencing stakeholders. Concepts such as stating, 'it's not corporate food producers that make a country great, it's the artisans of a nation; pioneering new ways of doing that influence cultural shifts and change' (Pat); and acknowledging artisans as both specialists and innovators (Carl).

However, the *backstory* of artisans at the core of the SMEs in this study compelled an adherence to their business model choice, irrespective of difficulties in their journey. Indeed, the higher costs, customer relationship issues, hospitality industry status quo, the disconnect with education providers, and the lack of trust in, and stifling policies of regulatory bodies created roadblocks on *a road less travelled*. When *a road less travelled* could not easily facilitate their journey, participants described building themselves a *tribe of journey-makers* to enable sustainability operationalisation in their SME.

### **4.3 Tribe of Journey-Makers**

This theme is defined by the action that occurred when the participants were impacted as stakeholders on *a road less travelled*. When faced with difficult situations the findings show that the participants transitioned and became change agents and created their own *tribe of journey-makers*. This action enabled sustainability operationalisation. That is, the participants accepted the higher costs attached to their pursuit; they found innovative solutions to counter the customer relationship issues, hospitality industry status quo, and disconnect with education providers by building and working with a tribe of ‘other’ journey-makers. The *tribe of journey-makers* theme is presented in Figure 5, and demonstrates the growing circle of like-mindedness, collaboration, awareness, and knowledge from the inside-out, with the artisan at its core.



**Figure 5. Tribe of journey-makers**

The *tribe of journey-makers* is illustrated as a growing tribe of like-minded agents with a mandate to build trust and foster engagement and awareness towards pro-sustainable and artisan philosophies. The *tribe of journey-makers* comprises participants as artisans, SMEs, staff, networks of like-minded others, fellow artisans and supplier networks, customers, and by community engagement. The theme starts with the journey itself and progresses on to showcase how the tribe has a mandate for knowledge-sharing, building awareness and forcing bottom-up change. The *tribe of journey-makers* theme concludes with the participants offering advice to others who may be considering a sustainable business model in hospitality. The *tribe of journey-makers* showcase how participants consistently found non-conformist and innovative ways of solving problems and adapting mechanisms to serve sustainability and artisan-producing outcomes. Thus, this theme demonstrates how the sustainable commitment of the artisan (discussed in *backstory*) provides a clear filter for decision making, and manifests as sustainable entrepreneurial actions.

As mentioned in the second theme, the journey for most participants was marked by trial and error, but this did not deter them. They accepted that their values make their

journey harder because they were on *a road less travelled*, but somehow accepted their journey. Pat's quote demonstrated this:

Because it's not always easy and the road is long; but you know it ... it's not always about where you are right now, it's about the journey and ... where you're getting to (Pat).

Generally, participants expressed that they reflected on their mistakes as necessary learning experiences with positive outcomes. They found it difficult to compromise their sustainable values, would often take what others may describe as a 'knock', but would consistently respond with optimism. Pat and Jay articulated this well:

You know it was hard financially but it actually gave us the breathing space to kind of figure out who we were and how we wanted to cook (Pat).

We didn't know anything about how to run a business, how to say this isn't working. Which is just as well, because after a year and a half if we'd known that it ... what not working was we would've stopped. But you know it was – every day it got a little bit better (Jay).

Enthusiasm to instil the sustainability dimensions into the SMEs created a problem at the start for some. Carl described too much diversification, and Olly reflected on initial expectations balanced with acceptance:

I made a lot of mistakes at the start of owning [X] where we were too diversified, our product range was too diversified. And actually we weren't making any money (Carl).

We wanted to [develop] veggie gardens as soon as we moved in here. We were disappointed that we couldn't do it all, but then when we just accepted that (Olly).

Most identified they had learnt to accept they could not do everything from the start. All mentioned that they recalibrated their thinking and endeavoured to move towards their sustainability goals at a more realistic pace. Olly and Carl articulated this:

You've got to kind of accept what you can and can't do and give yourself a break. Because you eventually get there. You want to do everything, and sometimes you can't. Cause you have all these ideas but you can't actually implement them (Olly).

You've got to be sometimes prepared to also know what to give up on. So you might persevere with one thing but, you know, fail. Know how to fail fast (Carl).

Participants recognised the distance they had travelled, accepted their mistakes and the higher costs attached to their business choice, and were generally very positive about their journey. Olly captured the spirit of her journey:

I can't really see any bad sides. Because it's working, I haven't had to change. The downside let me think ... only when the chickens jump on the table, that kind of sucks. 'Cause they're free range. I don't think we really have one. You know it's challenging (Olly).

The participants constantly demonstrated they were in the business for the long haul. Olly summed this up in the following quote:

Rome wasn't built in a day (Olly).

The journey to stay on *a road less travelled* by building a *tribe of journey-makers* when necessary was supported by a potent *backstory*. However, it also became evident that the participants possessed a deep understanding of sustainability as part of their SME business model. They leveraged this ideology against the status quo alternative, often with a measure of distaste, as demonstrated by Carl and Olly's quotes:

And you have to be prepared for your commitment to sustainability to actually impact on your bottom line. So therefore effectively you have to be an eco-capitalist. You can't just be a capitalist. Because otherwise if you were just a capitalist then you would get rid of all of those sustainability initiatives to see you've increased your bottom line (Carl).

If you actually step back and look at the big picture, then you can't help but kind of make these decisions. But if you just look at bottom line all the time for this year. Of

course you want ...to buy everything from a big corporate you know. You know you're going to make more money (Olly).

The participants considered the impact of their decisions certainly beyond economic outcomes, but more so in revolt against the dysfunctions they perceived in the mainstream business models discussed in *a road less travelled*. One participant acknowledged the personal and social value currency of her business model as a community member. Bea accepted that more traditional business methods would potentially generate better economic results but found value outside of the profit-pillar of conventional practice:

I guess you know like triple bottom line and things like that it's not just about making money. The value and pleasure you get from living in a community. Associating with people who want to be where they are. I think people really underestimate the value of community (Bea).

They alluded to the social, environmental and economic costs of inaction; the value of their decisions; and the benefits of their actions. The following quote by Wendy, demonstrated the benefits to the staff, and the benefits and financial costs to the business, showing how decisions are balanced through their softer-value lens and approach:

I've got 20 staff and just looking after their well-being, there's a kind of a good relationship you know between all parts of the business. And we do like morning tea here in the morning, and half the business turns up for coffee and the restaurant cooks lunch for about 30 of the staff a day. So they get lunch and stuff. So yeah, well it's having respect for the staff (Wendy).

Initiatives of this nature indicate the SMEs spent financial resources, time and energy, and endured higher costs to ensure improved social outcomes beyond self. Two participants discussed the triple bottom line of sustainability in a way that further highlights a deep understanding of their social, environmental and economic responsibility as hospitality SME operators. Pat and Jay stated:

You know we problem-solve as we go and we try and leave the world and ourselves in better shape at the end of the week, you know. Essentially, you know, we are making money but we're trying not to destroy the planet and ourselves and our staff in the process (Pat).

That triple bottom line thing where it's, you know, you have your money bottom line, you have your social bottom line, you have your environmental bottom line and they're equal. You know you can't, no mate, make a lot of money if you're ruining the environment. Or if your staff or your people are all unhappy (Jay).

Interestingly, apart from one, participants did not broadcast attention or reliance on any formal auditing system to account for their three-pillar approach. Jay's quote helped identify this:

Well it's not ... it's not something that you can, you know, it's hard to ledger (Jay).

However, their actions and examples consistently demonstrated a deep understanding and practice of sustainability operationalisation. Most interesting was the only non-owner participant's response to sustainability. Zac justified his SME's inclusions because of the larger entity's ideologies and not-for-profit status. As an individual operator Zac felt strongly that a business model considerate of sustainable values would not be a realistic or a successful choice. Zac's personal ideologies and business lens were more focused on economic outcomes, despite having a sustainability vision. Interestingly, he was alone in his thinking:

It's good, but it's not cost effective, it's not working in a real world. So because we do it, we can do it, we're run by the [large corporation] so we're happy to, we're not profit-driven. We have to set certain standards and stuff but as an individual operator I wouldn't bring in organic or anything like that in because the price is still too high in the country. I mean milk's coming down, I'm happy to do milk but other products like vegetables and meat, it's not cost effective. I'm sure other people have told you that as well (Zac).

Zac offered a potentially interesting insight that contrasted dramatically with the owner-participants in this study. While he imagined his green-purchasing was facilitated by the

not-for-profit status, his peers did not have that luxury but still would not deviate from their sustainability ideals and values. Whilst this contrast is outside the limits of this study, it made some sense and could be tested in future research. Indeed, the larger entity Zac worked for had a more sustainability- and artisan-focused mandate consistent with the owner participants' three-pillared principles. This foundation, albeit not-for-profit, drove the sustainable standards of the SME. The participants or governing board mandate fuelling the SMEs' operational practices contrasted with the hospitality industry status quo and slow move towards social and environmental mindfulness noted in *a road less travelled*. Pat and Bea's quotes illuminated the potent central fuel so prevalent in all the participants, and this helps demonstrate how this driving core spills into SME practice:

We get to do everything right as much as we can as human beings every day and we get to make the right decisions and we get to call the shots. This is one country where we're responsible for ourselves. So if [I] want organic cola and we buy it; if [I] want to use raspberries from a small grower down the road and pay him top dollar, that's our decision and there's massive benefits that flow on out from it. We wouldn't throw rubbish out the window, so why would we throw it down a hole (Pat).

And I think it would be very hard to think, 'Oh sustainable business that's all the go. I'm going to do that.' You've got to understand it or it's got to be part of where your head is really at, and where your heart is (Bea).

Growing a *tribe of journey-makers* from the artisans' sustainability consciousness at the core, was more than just a desire; it required a level of entrepreneurship to make things happen. All the participants were willing to try new ways of doing, to avoid being an impacted stakeholder, and to enhance their sustainable business components. The following quotes demonstrated the entrepreneurial behaviours, the risks, the give-it-a-go attitude, and perseverance necessary to make the journey:

You need to be prepared to be outspoken, or a risk-taker; that's important. Secondly I think you need perseverance. You can take a financial risk. To put something out there that is new. That no one's ever seen before. So you can take a financial risk, you can take a personal risk (Carl).

I can get the information and say, ‘Hey this is a new idea’ or ‘Try this’. You know we’ll give it a crack (Zac).

Yeah that determination, that following a dream. To open any sort of business and especially something that’s not mainstream. Like there were no other cafes out in the country when we started. And to be ground-breaking, you know you do have to have, you know, that resilience. To take the days when nobody comes. Like nobody! And you think, ‘Jesus, what’s the point?’ But tomorrow you get up and put your smile back on and do it again. Then keep at it (Jay).

When considering the SME as a change-making entity and a further ring in the *tribe of journey-makers*, the findings revealed that sustainability was expressed and demonstrated as deeply entrenched in the individual or SME’s business conscious and mainstreamed in their operation. Carl’s quote captured this:

I try to make sure that [X] has a sustainable consciousness. So when you talk about sustainable initiatives on a day-to-day basis, I see it as a two-pronged thing. I see it as ... what are the things that we should just be doing by default? You know, we should be separating our waste, sorting our compost and getting that collected. Essentially what are the functions of business, running a café where we can be sustainable. So those to me are the basics that I believe that anyone in business should be following. Where I see the second tier to that sustainable consciousness is part of our thinking (Carl).

The participants were adamant about doing it the ‘right way’ and ensured the SME was programmed to operationalise sustainability in their day-to-day practices. Matt’s quote highlighted the common thread in the findings, that is, the directive to normalise sustainability and the perception that the status quo is not satisfactory:

If enough people do it, if it becomes the norm, I mean it has to be, really. Since the other way isn’t happening (Matt).

The SMEs were expressed by the participants as an extension of themselves, and they all recognised that building a *tribe of journey-makers* was not a solo pursuit. Carl’s quote demonstrated this:

You need to know how to build a good network of like-minded thinkers who you can leverage off (Carl).

All participants expanded their tribe to include their staff. They were mindful of the responsibility to act in accordance with the sustainability mandate of their SME. As industry actors, the participants denied the hospitality culture of overworked and underpaid, and expressed a new attitude to the human resources within their business model. Jay succinctly expressed this:

It's turning your employees into business owners. So a big part of our sustainability is the staff, how the staff relate to the business, how they feel about the business. Their ownership in it if you like. We're aware of our obligation to them. We provide their livelihoods. But then [sic] provide ours. So it's totally symbiotic (Jay).

Collaboration and staff inclusion were demonstrated across the data set to enhance the working culture. Zac's quote showed a move toward team building and working together:

I don't tolerate any of that, and while I hold ideas I don't know all the answers. Let's work together and find the kind of answers together and I can teach you if I know it (Zac).

Interestingly Zac, the manager participant, demonstrated sustainability entrepreneurial skills to encourage staff engagement which were more consistent with traditional business thinking. Zac used key performance indicators (KPIs) to engage his staff in a sustainability and artisan mindset. KPIs are Key Performance Indicators that can be used to evaluate business or individual performance. Zac's quote demonstrated how he used KPIs:

The duty manager out the front, the senior supervisor, she looks after the wine and the beer and it's one of her KPIs to make sure that the wine and the beer range stay within ...using wineries – well, beer she's a bit limited – but wineries that have that kind of work with biodiversity or give money back to ecological [benefactors and partnerships] (Zac).

Zac reported improved environmental benefits, and using KPIs he delegated responsibility for outcomes beyond traditional business expectations. Discussion now turns to education.

The findings revealed that when the education providers within the sphere of influence were unable to deliver outputs that met the needs of the SME the participants found innovative alternatives. All participants used an array of strategies, including recruiting like-minded employees, creating educational induction processes, and providing ongoing systems training where sustainability and artisan philosophies were part of the business culture. The following quotes demonstrate this finding:

So on the first day of anybody coming here I always meet them as the owner and talk about the values of our business, and the philosophy. Because basically, if they don't get that we can't have them here because it's our brand. We educate our staff because it's actually a major value of our business (Olly).

You know you train people in the job. And we also ... , and we make it a focus of what we're all about. Like our ethos (Matt).

We do have very big inductions (Wendy).

Staff education was not just one-sided and a number of participants indicated they increased their sustainability knowledge from their employees. Wendy explained:

We've got three full time handymen [who] work for the business, and two full-time gardeners. So they have come to the business with some sustainable knowledge (Wendy).

There was a genuine desire to overcome the impact caused by the disconnect with education providers. Zac's quote showed the importance of providing effective on-the-job training and the risk if it is not executed well:

You know it's that education and you know I want people to stay working here as I don't want to invest time in them to leave after six months 'cause they didn't like the job (Zac).

Zac described a number of strategies to ensure his SME was a great place to work:

So let's work together, let's look at the resources, look at what we can do, look at how we can expand on it, look at how we can make it awesome for us. If it's not going to be awesome for us, let's not do it (Zac).

Staff inclusion and collaboration mechanisms were used by most participants to create business philosophy buy-in and encourage pride in their working environment, and increase the likelihood of staff retention. Counter to the perceptions of staff exploitation behaviours discussed in *a road less travelled*, the SME protocols around staff well-being stood in stark contrast to the hospitality industry status quo. Matt's quote demonstrated a positive stance towards hospitality employees:

We pay our employees the living wage, make sure that they're taken care of, so we have everybody on contracts and paying vacation and PAYE (Pay As You Earn tax) and all that stuff, (and) Kiwisaver (voluntary superannuation scheme) (Matt).

Feeling deeply responsible for staff and acting in accordance with the social well-being arm of sustainability was evident across the data set. Universally, participants wanted more for their staff. Some expanded on this and expressed a desire to improve the general standard of living and lifestyle of their employees. Matt and Jay's quotes testified to this finding:

So that just making it ... not like just a little transitional job. For some people it is a career so you know [you're] trying to make sure they're taken care of (Matt).

We do coaching with our managers, and we're encouraging our managers to coach their staff. So yeah, not about how they're doing their job, but about how their life is. So that social aspect is really important to us (Jay).

Participants recognised they could influence their employees by promoting their ethos and providing sustainability-centric education. Pat explained:

We need to look after staff, not treat them like dogs ... a business sort of culture that they want to stay and work here and also just try and live by the ethics that we sort of believe in (Pat).

Indeed, participants exhibited innovative internal policies to meet the sustainability objectives and it is evident that these created staff engagement, and improved social outcomes. The SMEs were staff inclusive businesses. Many participants considered their staff as friends, and all considered their staff as fellow collaborators to improve the sustainable and artisan elements of their business. Staff buy-in helped build tribes of collaborators and ultimately extended their tribes of like-minded journey-makers.

Network creation extended the tribe beyond the participants, the SME and the staff and this step was consistent across the data set. Networks were used as a means of strategising to facilitate sustainability operationalisation, and participants often rejected formal networking providers in favour of their trusted *tribe of journey-makers*. It was noted that creating partnerships is often employed to garner financial outcomes; however, the motivation to form alliances in this study was focused elsewhere. Carl and Olly's quotes exhibited their focus towards being amongst like-minded others, sharing business model ideologies, and improving sustainability operationalisation:

They all work in hospitality to some respect, or they supply to hospitality. They all have an artisan product. And they all care about sustainability and have sustainable DNA in their business. We will meet for dinner maybe once every two months and we'll talk about business and stuff like that. I think that I'm at ease with people like that, and I think I'm at ease with them because they get me and I get them. I don't have to explain to them why I'm trying to be sustainable; like, I don't get you know, 'you're trying to be a greeny' or whatever. Because they share the same values (Carl).

I think once you have something with meaning, or you really believe in sustainability, you can't help but have stuff to connect with, people with the same business integrity (Olly).

The participants formed and were part of these networks of like-minded others, often as a means of benchmarking their SME, as Bea described:

We met a couple of times a year and talked about what we were doing and that seemed to be helpful just with believing in what you do, I guess. Like-mindedness, and just reinforcement that you're on the right track (Bea).

Jay and Pat expressed how they shared ideas and helped each other in their combined quest to operationalise sustainability:

We share knowledge. I mean they designed the composting toilets that we've got (Jay).

You have to pick your battles and you have to surround yourself with good people (Pat).

Naming and promoting others in their *tribe of journey-makers'* network was similar across the data set. Participants were actively engaged in building connections. Wendy's quote demonstrated this:

I can introduce you to him. He's really passionate about that stuff. He's been quite a driving force in it. Every dish on his menu is just amazingly sustainable (Wendy).

It was very relevant that when the participants named and promoted others, they demonstrated they were very familiar with the fellow-network individual and their business. Carl's quote exemplified this finding:

I actually think that sometimes you've just got to market that substantiality is cool. You know like you've got to make it relevant to the audience. So like we use a supplier called [X] who owns a company called [X]. And he is on Instagram all the time and he's made [unglamorous product] cool. And desirable, and so he hasn't done it through shaming people, he's done it through celebrating the fact the people that, that use his services (Carl).

Participants all drew on the knowledge and experiences of their trusted *tribe of journey-makers'* network to solve problems. Carl's quote explained the merging of two networks and alludes to some of the benefits he experienced:

It's actually a folding in of [X] into [X] to create a stronger organic network in New Zealand. Better advocacy. I sort of network through those contacts (Carl).

Although there was increased use of non-formal networking initiatives to solve problems in rural SMEs, all participants relied on their unique *tribe of journey-makers'* networks to enable their sustainable business model activities. The participants all voiced examples of the benefits to themselves, others and the environment through building collaborative relationships in their networking *tribe of journey-makers*. Jay, Carl and Zac's quotes demonstrated an array of benefits:

So if you're wanting to be sustainable about, you know, what happens to your compost for example, building relationship with somebody so that you've got somewhere people [can] collect it. So building relationship with somebody who wants chicken food for example. Offering the resource to somebody else (Jay).

Well I think that's where you tap into your networks. And you say, 'Hey look, this isn't working for me what would you do?' (Carl).

Whatever they can't give away to the food people, we'll get boxes of figs and plums and crab apples and bloody whatever's come along. So they bring it into us and we turn it into produce and sell it back through the café basically. So pickles and preserves (Zac).

Essentially, the informal networks the participants described indicated a genuine ground-swell of like-minded others working together to facilitate each other's sustainable business models. They solved problems together, supported each other in their business pursuits, incubated and nurtured common-value friendships, and shared knowledge to facilitate and promote sustainability as a doable business model. Olly's quote articulated this well:

I don't have to throw yourself [sic] into [regional] networking nights. It happens organically. It's really mostly just going to someone's restaurant and asking them what they do. They all love sharing that information. There's no one holding their cards to their chest and saying, 'Oh I'm not going to tell you.' They love sharing it because you know they love letting the world know that you can do this (Olly).

The *tribe of journey-makers* spread widely into the supplier network. Again, this was a mutually beneficial cadre of like-minded others with a shared directive to propel sustainability operationalisation into mainstream thinking. As an example of collaboration and working together to increase the circle of sustainability change, the participants' actions were consistent with their values of sustainability. Bea's example showed the mutually respectful mindset of the individuals within her *tribe of journey-makers* who were concerned for the greater good:

So you know I don't mind paying twice as much if it's good, you know, in the overall scheme of things (Bea).

Indeed, the suppliers were engaged in problem-solving initiatives to better accommodate the elements of a non-traditional business model and improve sustainability uptake. Zac's quote was common among the findings and exhibited the problem-solving practices of a sustainability-focused entrepreneur. The benefits are shared and the sustainability mandate clear. Again, naming and promoting was used to fuel the momentum of like-minded others:

Packaging. We're going to work with them and I mean for a small outlay they'll see the benefit, we'll see the benefit. And those businesses are also looking to see how they can bring in sustainable kind of actions and moves as well. And then they can use it and they can go, hey we supply [X] SME (Zac).

In particular, the SMEs located in rural areas all worked hard as trusted stakeholders within their tribe of other journey-makers to promote and use the services of their fellow artisan small producers. As detailed in *a road less travelled*, the lack of trust and stifling policies of regulatory bodies restricted artisan production and sustainability operationalisation within the sphere of influence. However, the participants used entrepreneurial initiatives and authenticated their own standards based on mutual trust, respect and common values. The following quotes demonstrates the relationships between supplier and hospitality SME and offers insight and further understanding on the level of rapport and trust in the exchange partnership with the supplier network:

All the vegetables are from organic growers. We all know they're spray free, and we all know they're organic 'cause we visited their farms, but only 15 per cent of the produce is actually certified. But we know their farms and we know that they're organic (Olly).

I know certainly with [business X] they're not accredited organic but they're free range and preservative free and I know for a fact that [person X] couldn't be bothered getting a certain accreditation because it was like 200 bucks and she takes a lot of issue with that. She couldn't find one certificate and so we couldn't say we have free-range pork. You know it wasn't like it was organic, it was just saying free-range pork when clearly the pigs are in the paddock. What are we doing running around for, you know, it's their choice of providence is more important than stickers on walls. Which I know some businesses find quite amusing and they have quite a few (Pat).

The small producers did not have the financial means, nor did they value the integrity of the mark offered by providers within the sphere of influence. Critically, and more specifically the rural-based SMEs created micro-scale and unofficial authentication standards. This supplier network excluded formal providers and delivered a means of stewardship based on the trust-centric relationships they had constructed among their growing *tribe of journey-makers*. All the participants in this study demonstrated they worked together with suppliers, improving outcomes for each other, generating awareness and ultimately building a larger *tribe of journey-makers*.

Indeed, the mechanisms the *tribe of journey-makers* used to overcome the issues raised in *a road less travelled* were vast, innovative, sustainably conscious, and a united effort to grow the tribe was evident. The opportunist and creative nature of the sustainability entrepreneurs was further showcased as they expanded their tribe by increasing awareness, endeavouring to force bottom-up change, and disrupting the status quo. The participants recognised that customers were stakeholders who could be educated and influenced, and they innovatively created ways to overcome some of the customer relationship issues discussed under *a road less travelled* theme. Offering experiences to customers was an innovative initiative used by all the SMEs. The quotes from Jay, Zac and Olly captured this well:

It's all about experience now. We're not selling food, yeah our warmth, a friendship, there's a lot more to it. You know that's something special. Special experience (Jay).

Those groups and bring them in and they also have sleepovers and stuff (Zac).

I can't stand looking at burnt strips of spray under vineyard rows. But a lot of people haven't even thought about it. But if they come here for three hours and see a softness in the soil. They taste food that's real, and the wine's real, there's no interference to chemicals and if we give them a few pointers and there's a few notes and guide, you know little points that they pick up on the menu or something. Then I think, for me it's better to do, to get them to go away with an experience rather than preach them something. It's probably the most effective [way] just to turn the lightbulb on (Olly).

Engaging customers using experiences was a commonly employed strategy in the findings. Of particular interest was the level of responsibility the participants felt towards educating the customers. Carl's quote detailed this finding:

You know this is the journey from crop to cup. So what our job is we actually have to go beyond [agency], we have to educate consumers on where their coffee comes from. We have to educate these guys, and that's our job, that's what I feel our job is and that's what our job is going forward (Carl).

It was not unusual for the participants as sustainability entrepreneurs to take risks, walk the talk of their ideologies, and challenge the customers' experiences. Challenging the customers' experience was a risk outside traditional hospitality offerings. However participants consistently adhered to their sustainable principles to provoke consumer thinking. Jay explained some of the customers' reactions to the composting toilets in his SME:

We probably get at least as many positive comments as, well no actually way more positive comments as negative comments. And it's you know little kids kind of sometimes squeal. But their parents hopefully will say no it's all right, because people do just expect it to go away, that somebody else is going to look after that stuff (Jay).

Participants were all very conscious of the impact their niche offering had on customers and this created an opportunity to generate buy-in, increase demand for their artisan products, sustainability hospitality offerings, and to create awareness, and expand their *tribe of journey-makers*. A few, used technology. Carl's quote communicated this:

What we want is we want to have a transparent document that's on our website for people like yourself: who want to know about us and what our commitment to sustainability is (Carl).

Others were more interactive and engaging. A number of innovative and creative initiatives were employed, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

If they read the little blurbs on the menu and they ask about it, I kick into high gear and start going on about ... we try and get the story out there as much as possible. We did on a cookbook. That had a section on why we do it and we try and generate as much publicity around that as possible. Just keep it in the forefront of people's minds because I think if it's not part of your day-to-day thought pattern then it can be pushed out of there by other things (Matt).

So we don't go on about it at the table, but we do like to just give a few little notes with our service. On the front page of our new menu we'll have a story about what we believe in (Olly).

Most participants were involved in some form of community engagement to bring awareness to their cause and essentially increase their *tribe of journey-makers*, as shown by Pat:

Yeah I think when we changed a bit of a perception on how food can be (Pat).

Some participants created mutually beneficial exchange-partnerships. Zac and Jay explained how this works:

One of our members, she brings in boxes of fruit. What they do is they go round to people's houses and they pick up extra fruit that's coming off their gardens etc. It's a community organisation (Zac).

I'm a member of the local community association. I guess that's part of education. We've planted an open orchard. We're just talking about this winter planting a big row of artichokes (Jay).

Other participants used, partnering, education, and knowledge-sharing to increase awareness. Zac's quote shows how this initiative worked in his SME:

[There are] kids that have never had this kind of experience; their parents wouldn't be able to afford it. They bring those schools in and give them the whole experience, and then they also use our sustainable practices if it's applicable to what they're studying at the time. They'll take them up to the garden, they'll take them to see the beehive or how we recycle. They're kind of growing on that side, but it's really only if it's applicable to what they're doing (Zac).

Some participants demonstrated their SME was actively bridging the disconnect with educational providers. Interestingly in these circumstances, it was the participants who were offering the education, and not the students. The knowledge of sustainability operationalisation prevalent in the SMEs in this research is illustrated in the following quotes:

We do have groups from [polytechnic institute] hospitality when in their first year they often come here. They do a field trip round a few places. But it's more talking to us about our business philosophies and, you know, how we've kept doing it for so long (Jay).

I guess probably mostly we're on the end of being helpful. In advising rather than seeking so much (Bea).

Ultimately participants used multiple mechanisms to improve the disconnects discussed in a *road less travelled* theme, and entice a greater population into their *tribe of journey-makers*. Critically, participants revealed themselves as pro-sustainability entrepreneurs, and bottom-up disrupters, acting as conduits and bridging gaps to facilitate information-sharing and progressive uptake. The following extracts captured each participant's drive to force change across a whole spectrum of stakeholders within the sphere of influence, ultimately increasing the population of the *tribe of journey-makers*. Carl focused on decreasing the chasm between grower and consumer:

We are focusing a lot on closing the gap between producers and consumers. I mean you've got producers of coffee who don't really have a clue what is happening to their

coffee once it's taken on a boat and, you know, once its processed and goes to a producing country,[how] it's roasted and how it's then consumed, and who's drinking it, how they're drinking it, how much. So we need to educate the growers (Carl).

Matt concentrated on increasing awareness between artisan, grower and potential consumer:

And it's about fixing the broken food system, right? It's about kind of educating people and the way you know actually going back to some of these more traditional methods is going to be better for the planet (Matt).

Wendy networked with like-minded others to bring sustainability and artisan awareness through media and hospitality collaborative events:

We had this amazing event here earlier in the year— it was a foraging event. So we brought lots of wine and food writers from all round the world here, and seven top chefs and we all went out for the day in groups. Like for example, took some out fishing, another friend took some out hunting and some went gathering for truffles. Anyway they took all the media people out so they were all part of it and then they came back here with this huge bounty of ingredients and then the chefs all created a dish each and then the media sat down and ate it. And I guess that's an example of getting like-minded people together, you know (Wendy).

Matt demonstrated the impact his SME has on customers and staff alike:

You have to be really committed to the ideas around sustainable business right, to be really committed to them and also you have to be pretty helpful. I think that it can seem like there's not a lot that can be done. That you're not having a big impact. We have had a big impact on everybody who's come through here, especially has worked here. I've seen them all, you know go 'ah huh'. Yeah that's, that's really cool and it can be done that way. We've planted that seed, and the ideals and you have to be helpful [sic] that it's going to become the norm (Matt).

Pat, like his participant peers, demonstrated the optimism, can-do attitude and confidence that a sustainability-centric future is achievable:

It's a mixture of modern people and technology which is going to make some real changes for the better. The world really still is our oyster; we've got such a great opportunity to make some radical changes in the right direction. The great thing about living in this country is that you can change things quickly (Pat).

Matt described the belief that forcing bottom-up change will help normalise sustainability as a viable business model. Bea similarly argued that it inspires others:

It's all about kind of saying, 'Hey, we have to do it the right way,' so that we can show that it can be done and we can force the government to come along to the party. As a business owner you know what we can do is make our own decisions. You know we don't have to wait for legislation. We don't have to wait for them to catch up to a living wage we just do it. If we can make it work we can show them that it works (Matt).

We know all this stuff, and this stuff is all in practice and, you know, if people can see it, and be inspired by it, and use it in their lives, then that's just fantastic. And so, you know, getting other people taking it on (Bea).

Equally, participants were eager to share their knowledge with other hospitality entrepreneurs considering venturing into a similar business model. The advice to new entrants in this part of the findings helps link the themes together. The participants talked about the relevance of the values and vision discussed in their *backstory* and why this must be part of the intention to operationalise hospitality. Bea's quote acknowledged the fuel at the centre of the *tribe of journey-makers*, and the significance of a sustainability consciousness from the start of the journey:

My strongest piece of advice would just be to do what your heart really tells you, not just what you think, 'Oh that'd be fun'. You have to be dedicated. You have to believe in it. You have to be strong. You know you have to have an inner strength (Bea).

Olly demonstrated the link between her value system and vision for the future:

I just think you just have to think in the long term. But if you're kind of doing it for, I don't know, because its trendy at the moment and you don't really care about it deep down. Then I don't know, you might not enjoy it as much, or someone might see

through it. Or you might make lots of money. But I don't think you'll get the satisfaction out of it (Olly).

Carl discussed the financial reality of *a road less travelled*, about explained 'why' values and a sustainable business consciousness are important. Carl offered guidance for other hospitality operators considering how to best navigate a similar road:

First of all they need to make sure that their business is financially sustainable, and they're well capitalised before they start. They need to have a set of values that are relative to the category. And they need to apply the sustainable values along their journey and not try and be, perhaps, too sustainable at the start if their business can't afford for them to be. Unless they feel that it is a bottom-line thing that they can't change. You know, like it's part of the DNA of their brand (Carl).

Wendy and Pat's quotes encouraged new entrant hospitality operators to be realistic and patient:

Start small and be realistic, you know. Make realistic goals about things, that you can do, you know, that you can manage, yeah (Wendy).

It's a process of ticking boxes and you know don't beat yourself up if you don't get everything done on the first day cause it is a work in progress. But as long as you just chip away. And [you may be surprised] how much you can achieve quite quickly (Pat).

Olly and Carl acknowledged the difficulty of choosing a sustainable business model. They inadvertently demonstrated the relevance of sustainability entrepreneurial attributes as a means of navigating the journey:

You have to set your goals pretty high. You have to be ambitious. Give yourself a break, but slowly you can start ticking them off. And things that seem hard ... just keep asking questions, and try and work out a solution. But just keep trying to ask questions and solve them. Because eventually they'll happen (Olly).

You've got to be able to know how to push through. So you've got to know that even if you've had a bad day that the next day can be a really good day. So not giving up is

really important. 'Cause a lot of the time people if they try something and it's not working they might give up. You can't give up. You have to keep going (Carl).

In summary, this theme contributes to the body of knowledge supporting progressive change towards increased sustainable uptake and a recalibrated look at artisanal production. Indeed, participants mostly demonstrated a consideration of cost beyond economic outcomes and expressed a more holistic view consistent with Elkington's (1999) three pillars of sustainability. In contrast to some sustainability business model advocates (see Barbier, 1987; Hawken *et al.*, 1999; Roberts & Cohen, 2002) the only non-owner (Zac) in the research felt strongly that a sustainability-centric hospitality SME would not be a viable business model because of the costs. Aligned to the literature (i.e. Dwyer *et al.*, 2007; Elkington, 1999; Faux, 2005; Roberts & Cohen, 2002; Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Willard, 2012) some participants articulated the triple bottom line as an equal value currency. However, as hospitality SME operators, all participants acknowledged their social, environmental and economic responsibility, as discussed by previous scholars (e.g. Deale *et al.*, 2009; Sharpley, 2000; Yepes, 2015) and consistently demonstrated how their operations reflected this. In practice, this translated to the prescribed actions and expected sustainable outcomes exemplified in Sloan *et al.*'s (2013) operational model for hospitality discussed in Chapter 2 (see How is Sustainability Operationalised in Practice? Section 2.2.1). Participants did not appear to formally audit their sustainability behaviours as suggested by some authors (Barbier, 1987; Faux, 2005; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Withiam, 2011), with the exception of one (Carl), and another (Jay) mentioned the difficulty of managing the costs of sustainability.

Jones *et al.* (2016) and Willard (2012) suggested that improved staff relationships and morale in a sustainability-committed business model is an internal income-generating tool. In contrast, this was not expressed or demonstrated as a motivator for staff inclusion in this research. Similarly, creating external partnerships was identified in the literature as a mechanism to increase financial outcomes (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Willard, 2012). In contrast again, participants voiced and innovated actions more consistent with Elkington's (1999) suggestions to consider all three pillars, and were not prompted by a traditional economic focus. The trust relationships observed between suppliers and hospitality SMEs in this theme aligns to Alonso and O'Neill's (2010) research

advocacy, and confirms that insight and understanding can be found in this exchange partnership. Networking was used as a means of strategising to meet the long-term demands of sustainability, and to effect positive change and a new business consciousness. Although, consistent with the literature, a number of participants used technology to increase awareness (Buckley, 2012; Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2012), more practical tribe-building innovations were favoured.

The participants built a *tribe of journey-makers* to counter the difficulties they experienced and this enabled the operationalisation of sustainability in their hospitality SME. Participants accepted the higher costs of a sustainable business model by leveraging the true, sustainable costs of their actions, and innovating to reduce the time demands and hardship to self and staff. Customer relationship issues were innovatively managed in a number of ways, such as engaging customers with sustainable knowledge (all), challenging the customers' experience (Jay, Bea, Olly), and providing niche artisanal products at an acceptable price (all). The participants demonstrated that they distanced themselves from the conventional hospitality industry by using sustainability-focused initiatives in contrast to the industry standard, for example, taking care of staff well-being (Pat, Jay, Wendy, Bea, Zac, Matt), using environmental care actions (Wendy, Pat, Jay, Zac, Olly, Bea), and having a business consciousness aligned to sustainable values (all). They created their own education initiatives, such as induction of staff and systems training (Wendy, Jay, Matt, Zac, Olly); partnering with educational providers and offering their venue and knowledge (Jay, Bea, Zac); and demonstrating actions to bridge the gap with education providers. The lack of trust and stifling policies of regulatory bodies were overcome by participants using a range of mechanisms: authenticating their own artisan, organic or sustainable standards through trust and collaboration outside of formal offerings (Wendy, Pat, Bea, Jay, Olly, Zac); naming and promoting others to build a greater network of trust (all); and knowledge-sharing (all). Critically, their tribes of journey-makers were the mechanism created to overcome the inhibitors identified in a *road less travelled* theme. Pat's quote captured the potency of bottom-up change, the relevance of status-quo disruption, and the strength of building a tribe of like-minded individuals from the sustainability conscious core, or from the inside-out:

It isn't going to come without people pushing it so, you know, advocate for it. Be part of the change. You know, stand up for the things that you believe in (Pat).

The *tribe of journey-makers* theme demonstrated how participants overcame the obstacles on their less travelled road by creating a network of supportive collaborators. This theme reflects the opportunist, risk-taking, creative, problem-solving and innovative behaviours of entrepreneurs recognised in the literature (e.g. Schaper & Volery, 2004; Schumpeter, 1983). Further, according to the sustainable entrepreneur characteristics identified in the literature (e.g. Elkington, 1999; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Parrish, 2010), the *tribe of journey-makers* exemplifies the artisans in this research as fitting the description. The link between entrepreneur, sustainability and artisan was identified in Paxson's (2010) study, and the arrangement of these three concepts by Paxson is in contrast to the findings of this research. Paxson (2010) suggested that artisan-entrepreneurs reinvigorated a handcrafted, regionally nuanced, cheese product to attract a sustainability-motivated customer. The findings in this research demonstrates that artisans are motivated beyond the financial success of their SME, and fit Parrish's (2010) definition, that sustainable entrepreneurs exhibit an ability to balance benefits to self, others and nature. Intersecting this finding, contemporary artisan research has identified social and cultural values (Blundel, 2002; McKitterick *et al.*, 2016; Tregear, 2005), as well as environmental and economic values (McKitterick *et al.*, 2016). However, the value of the artisan beyond the act of sustainable, handcrafted small-production has not been investigated or recognised previously.

Critically, the participants, as artisanal small producers, exhibited bottom-up disrupter behaviours specific to the world's current sustainability concerns. This finding is consistent with the literature (i.e. British Library Board, 1841; Lucie-Smith, 1981; Rock, 1998), characterising artisans as small producers and change-makers responding to socio-temporal problems.

#### **4.4 Rewards of the Journey**

The fourth theme that emerged from the data analysis concerned the outcomes of the participants' journeys toward sustainable practice. The *rewards of the journey* claimed

by participants revealed the social, environmental and economic pay-offs, and brings the *backstory* full circle as they calculate their personal satisfactions through their unique value currencies. ‘Full circle’, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (n. d.), means “through a series of developments that lead back to the original source, position, or situation ...” Therefore, bringing it full circle illustrates the rewards as tangible evidence of innovative and resilient action discussed in the *tribe of journey-makers* theme, and driven from the artisans’ backstory, and the starting point, namely the sustainability consciousness. The participants all attested to and demonstrated the success of their business model. Financially, they all considered their business viable in a traditional business sense. Zac and Jay’s quotes testified to this:

We’re a really profitable business now (Zac).

We need to make a living, and we make a nice one (Jay).

The participants recognised the environmental rewards as a result of their sustainability practices. They celebrated their ability to create environmental improvement or damage reducing initiatives. Zac and Jay offered tangible evidence of this:

All the money generated out of here goes back into the valley, preserving the valley, preserving this environment. So in the surrounding areas they’re seeing all this bird life popping up now (Zac).

We had, you know this much [indicates small distance with hands] environmental impact. And we did this much [indicates larger distance] to mitigate. I mean we have planted ten thousand trees so you know that does something for the carbon (Jay).

Pat’s capacity to support and progress environmental initiatives was expressed as a reward gleaned from the SME’s financial health:

Well we’re lucky in the fact that the business is successful to the point where it can start to fund more ambitious projects. But elevated to, you know, potential to put a couple of electric power points in. You know you could actually do that with a successful business. You can actually say okay well how much is it, and because your business is not in a financial death grip you can actually make decisions like that (Pat).

The fact participants could help others because of their financial success was a much-celebrated reward common to all participants. Social outcomes were identified spanning sponsorship, supporting local business and clubs, to enhancing community events and generally fostering social well-being outside of themselves and the financial values of traditional business. Bea and Olly's quotes attested to this:

I guess on a community level too, you know, we give money to arts events and to the local theatre and to the local community radio station and schools. Sponsorship for things, or else you know regular advertising. Which is really to give them money more than to advertise us. You know that's what our bottom line is (Bea).

We sponsor a lot of art movements. Like provide free wine to the New Zealander who goes to [international event] every two years to bring New Zealand there. And we support the [region] Art Gallery. And we think it's a really important part of society, because it's something anyone can go and enjoy (Olly).

Participants recognised a value beyond self. Bea's quote indicates her SME offered employment in her local community:

We believe in employing local people. You know, to keep our community alive. Some of the people that we are employing now having been in business for 24 years weren't even born when we began (Bea).

Zac detailed the positive results generated from the on-site orchard to the SME and the local people:

The orchard is ... basically the deal is, what the community don't take, we'll take the extras, and then we'll turn that back into products that we can then sell through here as well (Zac).

Olly identified the benefits to her SME, local producers and positive community building outcomes:

So for me sustainability is about building a community as well. That makes our lives easier. Cause it's much easier to buy off our locals. We don't have to fill out as many

forms and all sorts. There's so many good things about being sustainable. So the long term ... it's the long-term benefits I think that are really the pluses for being sustainable. 'Cause you build a great network (Bea).

Rewards registered by participants were often aligned to their *backstory*; they were personal, social, environmental and financial. Zac's *backstory* came full circle and the reward he registered for the larger entity he worked for was evident. The community *backstory* had detailed a 'vision for the valley', in the face of probable environmental degradation. The reward of this community initiative was realised, as Zac communicated that next year's artisan production was expected to reach 50 kilos, ultimately offering what Zac labelled as 'a taste of the valley'. He criticised a 'tired' hospitality industry culture and chose to manage the SME because there was promise and scope for reduced hours, with personal rewards:

I get to see my kids more here (Zac).

Olly felt rewarded by delivering on her *backstory*, living by her artisan food philosophies and long-lens towards a sustainable future for the following generations:

The plus side of that is when you do something that has meaning, you're really satisfied. The meaning gives so much to your day; every day is so great. It's much more fun when you're doing something for a reason, with a philosophy behind it. Whereas if you're just trying to sell widgets and make money. To be technically interested in your artisan product you can't help but kind of succeed. You can't help it (Olly).

Carl's quote brings his *backstory* full circle as he acknowledged his personal achievement, SME benefits, brand integrity and status amongst like-minded others:

Therefore we have been seen as a trailblazer. In business in sustainability, therefore that has helped our brand. But only helped our brand because we're genuine about it, not because we've added it on and capped it on and said look at us we're great because we get our paper recycled or whatever (Carl).

Matt profited from the impact his sustainability-focused practices had on his well-being and as a contribution toward normalising sustainability-centric businesses. Essentially, he reaped a return on his values and vision for an improved sustainable future:

The sustainable organic stuff is still not the norm. It's becoming way more trendy. The easier part is that I enjoy it and it's better for my peace of mind (Matt).

Wendy's *backstory* was evident as she acknowledged the impact her SME had, and continues to have on the local community and economy:

I think, and I don't want to ... like ... float our boat or anything, but I think this business and this family, you know, is a positive thing for this area. And a good example (Wendy).

Jay valued the feel-good factor of what he perceived as doing the right thing and acknowledged the financial benefits of his action. Jay's quote honoured his dream of living a sustainability-conscious life:

I mean it feels good, like it feels like the right thing to do. But also [I] know that it makes good money sense. There's not a downside to it. I mean I can't think of another way that I would live. So it's just normal (Jay).

Bea's journey had paid off as she realised that the community-inspired SME she and her partner started more than 25 years ago would continue in her absence:

Well we feel even now that if we walked away the community would keep it running. So that's pretty good (Bea).

Pat's rewards bought him full circle and fulfilled his *backstory* philosophies around artisan food and delivering a viable hospitality business model with a long-term sustainability-focused lens:

The best thing is just having the belief that you are doing something worthwhile. After a while – it's just like a critical mass now that we're up and running – you know, all those things that we've done like growing our own things that make things cheaper, which

means you know all those kind of feel good sort of philosophies they're actually paying dividends now. It's just a nice way to go home after work, and a nice way to arrive to work when you know you get more things right than you get wrong (Pat).

The *rewards of the journey* brought the participants' *backstories* full circle in a variety of ways, offering them all different opportunities for satisfaction. Ultimately the participants demonstrated that their business model delivered very personal rewards that were beyond the economic, environmental and social objectives detailed in Sloan *et al.*'s (2013) hospitality operational model. The participants all perceived their businesses to be successful, sustainable, hospitality SMEs. The findings reveal that the participants registered the successes or rewards of their journey through a unique and softer-value currency lens and articulated this through a social, environmental and economic currency, as described by some authors (e.g. Elkington, 1999; Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Parrish, 2010). The *rewards of the journey* demonstrated that expectations and sustainable values were important operational objectives that contributed to their perception of business success.

The *rewards of the journey* theme described the sustainability outcomes claimed as important to participants and this is consistent with authors' definitions of sustainability intentions (i.e. Deloitte, 2010; Dwyer *et al.*, 2007; Elkington, 1999; Faux, 2005; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cohen, 2002; Sloan *et al.*, 2009; Stubbings, 2009; UNCHE, 1972; WCED, 1987; Willard, 2012). This last theme substantiated further the authenticity of the participants' sustainability mandate and uniquely took the themes full circle by showing how the *backstory* of each artisan was realised.

## **4.5 Summary**

As observed by numerous academics (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cohen, 2002; Sloan *et al.*, 2009) authenticity in sustainability action is debatable. However, the findings presented in this chapter demonstrate sustainability was deeply entrenched in the personal consciousness of the participants and the SMEs in this research. All the participants framed the sustainability and artisanal facets of their SMEs as philosophies or a type of business DNA. Interestingly the owners went further and interpreted this as a personal attribute, lifestyle choice or a concern or distasteful alternative external to

their values and world view. Doing the right thing because it is the right thing is an action that Willard (2012) assigned to a truly practising sustainable business, and the findings exemplified numerous instances of this behaviour.

Establishing why the participants chose a sustainable business model in the *backstory* theme, helped explain a probable energy source that fuelled the participants' resolve when navigating their journey. The participants' values and vision were expressed as deeply entrenched in their *backstories*, and this appeared to have provided, and continued to ignite a fire in their belly. Namely, a sustainability consciousness; this is discussed using the 'Golden Circle' perspective in the following chapter. A *road less travelled* theme offered an emic perspective of SME hospitality operators navigating their sustainable business model and exposed the obstacles they experienced along the journey. This theme offered an opportunity for interested stakeholders to garner knowledge perceived from the 'insider' vantage. The *tribe of journey-makers* theme demonstrated a range of sustainable entrepreneurial behaviours. The expressed disenchantment of the participants, their penchant to distance themselves from the status quo, followed by an example of their sustainable initiatives, revealed a recurrent pattern in the data. This pattern mimics the historic, radical artisan voice identified by Lucie-Smith (1981) which was in revolt against unacceptable, era-specific, social and environmental problems, and which hoped for a better future.

Ultimately all four themes respond to the important question that drove this research, "How do hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME?" The findings revealed that artisans-of-old ideologies are innovatively active in the current environment and have the potential to shape political landscapes and disrupt era-specific problems. In Chapter 2, bottom-up change was identified by Buckley (2012) as critical in the move towards sustainability. Accordingly, the findings in this research demonstrate the value of the participants as artisans and as bottom-up disrupters. The artisan may be the potential harbinger of the hospitality fraternity, leading by example, in pursuit of what Ehrenfeld (2008, p. 9) defined as "the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever."

## Chapter 5. Discussion

The wider body of literature and implications of the findings discussed in the previous chapter resonate with the Golden Circle perspective alluded to in the literature review (see Chapter 2). The artisans' sustainability consciousness that inductively emerged from the data analysis is significant and will be used as the basis, or core ideal and discussed using the Golden Circle perspective. This chapter discusses the importance of artisans, and their sustainability consciousness as the critical starting point on *a road less travelled* using the Golden Circle perspective (Figure 6).

### 5.1 The Golden Circle Perspective

This research provides evidence that artisans and their sustainability consciousness (their *backstory*) is the source of pressure responsible for delivering operationalisation success from the inside, or core ideal. This is significant because it contrasts somewhat with the literature surrounding sustainability in hospitality, and the focus on pressure to insight action from resource scarcity and rising costs (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Jauhari & Verma, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Other pressures to elicit hospitality business action include economic pressure, that is, the motivation to reduce costs (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Pantelidis *et al.*, 2010); by exacting competitive advantage (Boley & Uysal, 2013; Sloan *et al.*, 2013; Thompson *et al.*, 2010; Tyrrell *et al.*, 2012; Willard, 2012), or just to engage a 'green' customer (Jones *et al.*, 2016). Critically, pressure to operationalise sustainability comes from the 'outside' (i.e. resource scarcity, rising costs) to incite industry action and change that fits a more traditional business model (economic pressure, competitive advantage).

The focus on outside pressure is traditionally the dominant research lens, and therefore is expected to provoke a move towards more sustainable business models, and inform stakeholders. For example, Font *et al.*'s (2016) study of 900 SMEs attested to an industry response that correlates with these frequently researched drivers (such as, business competitiveness, societal legitimisation) as reasons for sustainability, with the exception of a cluster labelled 'lifestyle'. The lifestyle category identified by Font *et al.* (2016) included value- and lifestyle-orientated drivers, and captures only a small segment of the drivers communicated by the participants and demonstrated in the

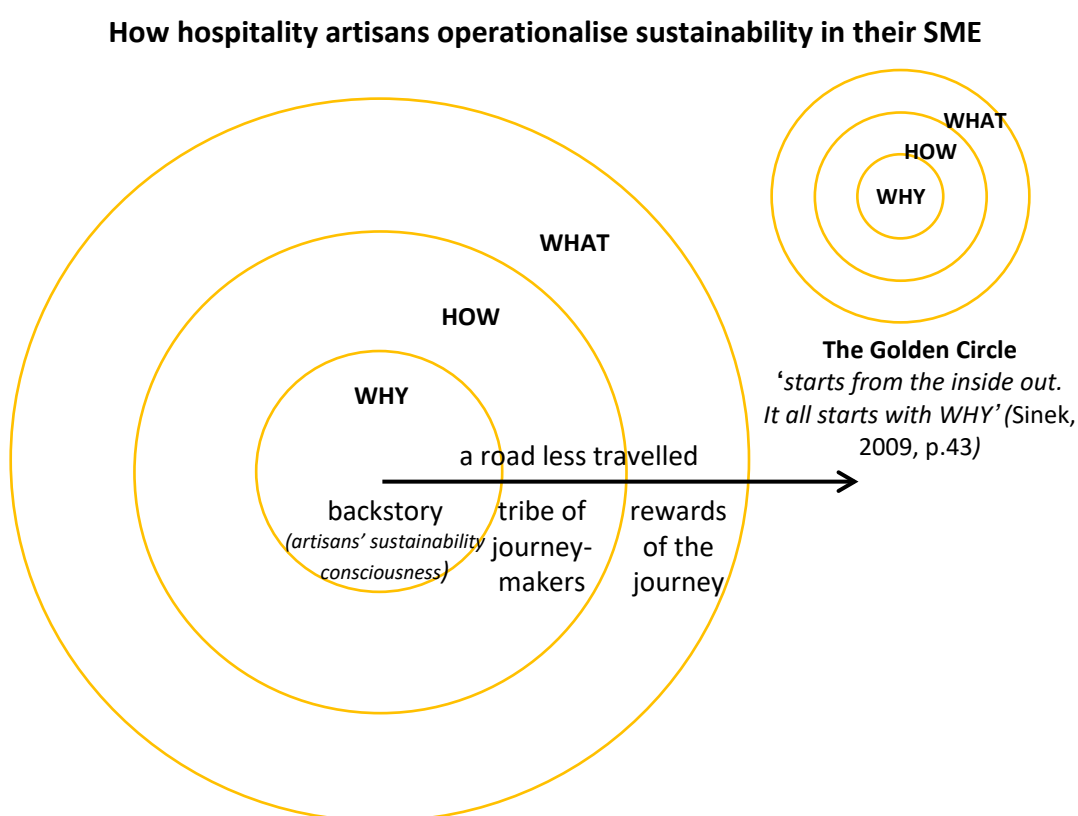
*backstory* theme. Interestingly, Font *et al.* (2016) did not consider, and simultaneously acknowledged, that little was known about an SME's starting point, that is, where in the life cycle of a business does sustainability start? In response, and in contrast to the dominating outside-pressure focused literature, the *backstory* theme identifies the artisans' sustainability consciousness as the pressure, and this explains 'why' they operationalise sustainability and drive change.

The journey on *a road less travelled*, was illustrated from a central starting point, with the artisans' *backstory*, and sustainability consciousness at the core (See Figure 4. Final thematic map: Phase 6). The artisan was again positioned as the inside circle in the *tribe of journey-makers* (see Figure 5), to illustrate the potency of the sustainability consciousness as the central starting point. The artisans' sustainability consciousness provided the pressure from the core, or inner circle and this shows the significance of the sustainability journey's starting point (*backstory*), and where the momentum is driven from. This is different, as the reasons underlying sustainability are not focused on competitor advantage, or dominated by resource scarcity, but driven by the artisans' beliefs and ideologies – a true sustainability consciousness. The artisans' sustainability consciousness started them on *a road less travelled*, which is an interesting finding. The artisans' sustainability consciousness can be discussed by correlating the journey on *a road less travelled* with other historical status quo disrupters using the Golden Circle perspective. Proposing this correlation using the Golden Circle perspective responds to Lim's (2016) encouragement to approach the issue of sustainability in hospitality from less conventional angles of understanding in the pursuit of solutions.

The Golden Circle is a visual representation of a pattern of thinking, acting and communicating, and founded by ethnographer, university lecturer, and inspirational speaker, Simon Sinek. According to its creator, the Golden Circle was inspired by the golden ratio and is related to balance and "offers evidence of order in the seeming disorder of nature" (Sinek, 2009, p. 49). Sinek's premise is based on the ideal that by unveiling 'why' we do what we do reveals the potent core of a movement, culture or organisation. The findings demonstrated the potency of the artisans' 'why' by revealing the sustainability consciousness underpinning the *backstory* theme. Other academics acknowledge the value of this concept. Anderson (2016) used the Golden Circle to

demonstrate the value of an ethical focus in corporate governance, reflecting Sinek's (2009) claims that all good businesses are purpose-driven. Weinstein (2015) described the difficulties physicians experience as they navigate a bureaucratic health system, and used the Golden Circle perspective to inspire peers to reflect on 'why' they did what they did as a means of enacting change.

The Golden Circle is orientated from a central starting point, and justifies the importance of 'why' at the core (Sinek, 2009). The starting point that orientates a journey may be rooted in, a core ideal, a desire for change, or a 'fire' at the centre of a movement (Sinek, 2009), and the artisans' sustainability consciousness revealed in the *backstory* epitomises this synopsis. To demonstrate the significance of 'why', the theme sequence presented in Chapter 4 (Findings) is illustrated below using the Golden Circle perspective.



**Figure 6. How hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME: The Golden Circle**

The importance of the artisans' sustainability consciousness in the *backstory* theme illustrates how the theme sequences relate to the Golden Circle. Sinek (2009) used the

Golden Circle perspective to illustrate the successful outcomes generated from the order that starts at ‘why’, followed by ‘how’ and then ‘what’. The elements that characterise the three stages of the Golden Circle are important and are shown in table format (see Table 2) to capture the essence of each stage of the journey and demonstrate how these relate to the themes discussed in the findings.

**Table 2. The Golden Circle characteristics**

<b>WHY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a clear filter for decision making</li> <li>• denotes a purpose, and belief</li> <li>• provides context to others</li> <li>• has long lasting impact on results</li> <li>• sets an expectation</li> <li>• is a call to action</li> </ul>
<b>HOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are actions taken to realise the WHY</li> <li>• makes a WHY tangible</li> <li>• is guided by WHYs conscious</li> <li>• manifests into mechanisms, processes and systems within organisations and cultures</li> <li>• is an entrepreneurial mindset</li> <li>• is action orientated</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the result of action and the tangible proof of WHY</li> <li>• is where authenticity is realised</li> <li>• is the product, outcome, and pay-off for action</li> <li>• is the rational</li> <li>• defines the journey</li> <li>• is where goals are realised</li> </ul>

Adapted from Sinek (2009)

The significance of ‘why’ is depicted by showing the relationships between the Golden Circle pattern and examples from the findings of this research.

‘Why’ asserts a value system that sets an expectation and standard to guide an action. Participants’ quotes gave evidence to this. For example, Carl’s sustainability consciousness captured this:

To have a set of values that are relative to the category...apply the sustainable values along their journey ... like it's part of the DNA of their brand (Carl).

'How' denotes the actions taken to make 'why' tangible. Carl articulated this well, and illustrates the impact of his actions issuing from his sustainability consciousness:

Be prepared for your commitment to sustainability to actually impact on your bottom line ... you have to be an eco-capitalist ... if you were just a capitalist then you would get rid of all of those sustainability initiatives to see you've increased your bottom line (Carl).

'What' are the results of action, tangible proofs of 'why', and is where authenticity is realised. Carl captured the essence of this well:

We have been seen as a trail-blazer. In business in sustainability, therefore that has helped our brand. But only helped our brand because we're genuine about it, not because we've added it on and said look at us we're great because we get our paper recycled or whatever (Carl).

The journey of how artisans operationalise sustainability in their hospitality SME on *a road less travelled* mirrors the 'why', 'how', and 'what' pattern. This pattern is identified as the Golden Circle, and critically starts with 'why' (Sinek, 2009). Sinek (2009) noted that Steve Jobs of Apple Computers, the Wright brothers and Dr Martin Luther King all started their journey with a potent 'why'. These, among many others, share the crucial starting point that orientates the journey from a desire for change, and their stories are used by Sinek (2009) to argue the strength of starting with a strong rationale: a 'why'. The following table illustrates and describes the Golden Circle perspective that tracks the journey of the American Civil Rights Movement, the artisans on *a road less travelled*, and the Apple success story.

**Table 3. WHY is where the journey starts**

WHY (did they do this)	HOW (did they do it)	WHAT (was the outcome)
<u><sup>a</sup>American Civil Rights Journey</u>		
Dr King had a dream about a nation where all people are equal regardless of colour, and where all citizens deserved freedom of life and happiness	By activating large numbers of people, black and white, demanding freedom and equality through non-violent action	Historically his dream impacted the way American people thought and acted, and prompted social change to counter segregation and inequality
<u><sup>a</sup>Apple Success Story</u>		
Steve Jobs wanted to give individuals the capacity to perform at the level of any highly resourced company	Creating user-friendly technology that empowers individuals	The Apple computer, iPod, iTunes and iPhone products that empower individuals
<u><sup>b</sup>A road less travelled</u>		
The artisans sustainability consciousness is the expectation and fuel driving their business model	Having sustainable entrepreneurial networks as demonstrated in the <i>tribe of journey-makers</i> theme	The tangible evidence of sustainable operationalisation in hospitality SMEs, and the artisans' reported economic, environmental, social and personal rewards
<u><sup>b</sup>Pat's Golden Circle</u>		
I[t's] kind of incomprehensible and incompatible to run a business in conflict with your own personal values ... If you want to change the world, you know, you need to get off your arse and do it (Pat).	We get to do everything right as much as we can as human beings every day ...we get to make the right decisions ... we get to call the shots. if [I] want to use ... raspberries from a small grower down the road and pay him top dollar, ... that's our decision and ... there's massive benefits that flow on out from it ...we wouldn't throw rubbish out the window, so why would we throw it down a hole (Pat).	The best thing is just having the belief that you are doing something worthwhile. After a while – it's just like a critical mass now that we're up and running ... all those things that we've done like growing our own things that make things cheaper, which means ... all those kind of feel good sort of philosophies they're actually paying dividends now. It's just a nice way to go home after work, and a nice way to arrive to work when you know you get more things right than you get wrong (Pat).

Note: <sup>a</sup> American Civil Rights journey and the Apple success story information adapted from Sinek (2009), *Starts with WHY*; <sup>b</sup> a road less travelled and Pat's Golden Circle adapted from research findings

Martin Luther King started and orientated the American Civil Rights journey with ‘I had a dream’. According to Sinek (2009), this thought-provoking speech challenged and empowered individuals of every race to consider their thinking, behaviours and prejudices in pre-civil rights America. Dr King’s potent ‘why’ according to Sinek (2009) inspired the civil rights movement from the inside, creating a golden circle of change that has become a new status quo.

Similarly, Apple co-founders, Wozniak and Jobs, wanted to empower individuals with resources to counter corporate dominance (Sinek, 2009). This ‘why’ manifested into the creation and production of affordable, easy-to-use, technology-based devices designed to empower individuals (Sinek, 2009). Significantly, people all over the world now use the iPod, iPhone, iPad and iMacs. Their efforts critically disrupted the status quo of the music industry’s distribution model by reducing the power of phone service providers and giving individuals the capacity to perform at the level of a highly resourced company.

As demonstrated in the American Civil Rights journey, and Apple’s success story, ‘why’ fuels actions from the inside or core. Importantly, these examples show the level of progressive change realised when orientated from ‘why’s’ call to action. The findings of this research as expressed in the four themes, demonstrate how the artisans ‘why’ discussed in the *backstory* theme, manifested as the ‘how’ actions demonstrated in a *tribe of journey-makers*. As an example, the artisans created opportunities to prompt customers to think through challenging their reality and making it personal to them. Jay described the customer challenges and response:

A composting toilet ... as well and that, I know that that’s a challenge for some people. You know it’s not a cheap place to stay and it’s like. That’s ... actually sustainable; it’s not going away somewhere, you’re not giving it to somebody else to look after. It’s ... your response; we’re taking responsibility for it you know (Jay).

We probably get at least as many positive comments as, well no actually way more positive comments as negative comments. And it’s you know little kids kind of sometimes squeal. But their parents hopefully will say no it’s all right. Cause people do just expect it to go away. That somebody else is going to look after that stuff (Jay).

This illustrated Jay's sustainability consciousness manifested into action, and 'how' he challenged current thinking. Similarly, Olly created an opportunity for customers to see, taste, feel and hear the sustainable alternative while looking over the spray-free vineyard:

I can't stand looking at burnt strips of spray under vineyard rows. But a lot of people haven't even thought about it. But if they come here for three hours and see a softness in the soil. They taste food that's real, and the wine's real, there's no interference from chemicals and if we give them a few pointers and there's a few notes and guide, you know little points that they pick up on the menu or something. Then I think, for me it's better to do, to get them to go away with an experience rather than preach them something. It's probably the most effective [way] just to turn the lightbulb on (Olly).

These innovations contributed to inspiring change and building awareness, and demonstrate 'how' they managed on *a road less travelled*. Zac's quote shows how his SME's sustainability consciousness materialised into actions, and financial costs were reconciled over the environmental and social benefits:

All the money generated out of here goes back into the valley, preserving the valley, preserving this environment. So in the surrounding areas they're seeing all this bird life popping up now (Zac).

Zac's SME offered an environment for students, tourists, local community and interested educational providers to see and hear an ever-increasing population of bird life. Zac's SME provided an opportunity to see, taste and even become involved in an organic community garden. Zac captured the environmental and social effect of a sustainability consciousness in action:

[There are] kids that have never had this kind of experience; their parents wouldn't be able to afford it. They bring those schools in and give them the whole experience, and then they also use our sustainable practices if it's applicable to what they're studying at the time. They'll take them up to the garden, they'll take them to see the beehive or how we recycle. They're kind of growing on that side, but it's really only if it's applicable to what they're doing (Zac).

These examples taken from the *tribe of journey-makers* theme, correlate to the action-centric ‘how’ of the Golden Circle perspective, and demonstrates the potency of ‘why’. The artisan with sustainability consciousness at the centre testifies to this concept. Similarly, according to Sinek (2009), albeit on a much grander scale, Dr King inspired individuals to believe equality was not only their right but a real possibility. Sinek (2009) justified that Dr King’s dream, empowered individuals and united a citizen movement with a single vision and enough collective power to change a country. Significantly, the Golden Circle correlation demonstrates that the core ‘why’ fuels and strengthens artisanal enterprises, building momentum and awareness. The findings have demonstrated that the artisanal enterprises in this study actively challenge and change the status quo.

## **5.2 Summary**

Chapter 4’s theme sequence was correlated with status quo disruption success stories using the Golden Circle perspective (see Figure 6) to emphasise the significance of the artisans’ sustainability consciousness. This chapter demonstrates the importance of a potent starting point, the influential impact it imparts, and its significance toward a journey’s success. Therefore, it is hoped, the Golden Circle perspective helps illustrate the relevance of Font *et al.*’s (2016) recommendation and the importance of understanding the starting point of a hospitality business’s journey toward sustainability. The relevance of ‘why’ and its impact on success exposes an influential point on the sustainable journey, providing a potential gateway to important knowledge, intervention, understanding, research, and infinite opportunity.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

A summary of the key findings and research aim are discussed in this chapter. The methodologies used in this research are then reviewed, and the implications, recommendations and opportunities are presented for consideration.

### 6.1 Summary of Key Findings and Review of the Research Aim

The aim of this research was to answer the question, “How do hospitality artisans operationalise sustainability in their SME?” As mentioned in Chapter 1, this curiosity evolved from my own difficulties experienced while trying to develop a business plan for a sustainable hospitality business in rural New Zealand. As a practical approach was needed, the desire to fully understand how to create such a business resulted in this study. The need to align practice with theory is also a gap identified in existing scholarship. Hospitality artisans, sustainability motivations and entrepreneurs offered a unique mix of phenomena to consider together. The businesses that met these criteria provided a set of characteristics promoted by Buckley (2012) as probable knowledge-rich areas in sustainable hospitality and overlooked in previous research.

The findings of this study offer insights for hospitality operators considering a sustainability business model. This knowledge was achieved by exposing ‘why’ the participants chose a sustainable business model in the *backstory* theme. This discovery helped explain a probable energy source that fuelled the participants’ resolve when navigating their journey. The *backstory* theme uncovered a relevant starting point on the sustainable journey. This theme particularly describes unique person typologies, their values and visions and how these are imbedded in their personal resolve and business DNA. It uncovers the artisanal sustainability consciousness as the rationale that best describes their commitment to sustainability (referred to as the ‘why’) and, as the themes progress, the necessity for this unrelenting drive becomes increasingly relevant.

The theme *a road less travelled* identified an array of problems to expect, and from who, or what source, during their drive towards sustainability. The range of inhibiting factors discussed in the findings was reflected in the literature and informs interested stakeholders, particularly hospitality operators, about the likely difficulties when they

choose a sustainable business model. The *tribe of journey-makers* theme demonstrates ‘how’ the artisans overcame the inhibitors identified in the previous theme and explains the innovative actions the artisans used while being guided by their sustainability consciousness. Critically this theme detailed the participants’ experience of their journey, their attitudes to it, and their sacrifices and celebrations. Ultimately the *tribe of journey-makers* theme illuminated the level of sustainability entrepreneurship necessary to navigate *a road less travelled*. The final theme, *rewards of the journey*, reveals ‘what’ the participants described as the outcome of their journey. The *rewards of the journey* identified the personal, social, environmental, and economic rewards described by participants, and provided proof of a sustainable SME business model. The *rewards of the journey* theme showed how each participant delivered on their *backstory* by bringing it around full circle. Bringing it full circle illustrates the rewards as tangible evidence of innovative and resilient action discussed in the *tribe of journey-makers* theme, and driven by the ‘why’ factors (sustainability consciousness) discussed in the *backstory* theme. This helps link the themes together and shows the uniqueness of each participant, and demonstrates the individual differences as each participant moves through the same journey sequence on *a road less travelled* with their common traits. The implications, recommendations, and opportunities for future research are discussed in Section 6.3.

## **6.2 Reflections on the Methodology**

Qualitative methods provided a sound and fitting methodology for this study, albeit a less favoured approach in hospitality research according to a recent survey by Kim *et al.* (2017), wherein positivist research was found to dominate. Through sharing personal stories, previous industry experiences, and speaking with a reasonable level of sustainability knowledge, it was relatively easy to build rapport and demonstrate empathy. Conducting the interviews in the participant’s SME (with the exception of one by Skype) generated greater ease of communication and provided a relaxed space to talk. The interview and open-question style was an effective method to gather knowledge from an emic perspective, and the insider’s view of the phenomenon of interest proved valuable, as already observed by other researchers (e.g. Creswell, 2013; Jennings, 2010; Kumar, 2014; Patton, 2002). This stimulated off-topic discussion.

Listening to the participants' experiences of operationalising sustainability from their practical and lived vantage point revealed some seemingly disparate political stances and personal histories. This level of freedom gave participants the space to disclose their personal dissatisfaction about a range of topics that initially seemed irrelevant to the research's aims. However, by using thematic analysis to interpret the data beyond mere description, the seemingly off-topic discussions revealed information about sustainability operationalisation not considered in the literature review or the interview guide.

These wider communicated perceptions, ideologies and experiences became the most relevant data to the study's aims and manifested as the most interesting finding, which was the 'why'. The 'why' was seen as a starting point, and helped shape the pattern sequence, and made sense of the connections between themes. A more rigid procedural approach would have been less likely to unleash, and interpret, the full scope of knowledge and understanding possessed by the participants, who were typical of the hospitality industry operators the research aim relied on.

A detached and systematic approach typical of positivism may more readily claim knowledge value through replication and quantifiable data. An interpretive approach cannot deem the findings a reflection of the general hospitality industry experience. However, as promoted by Patton, (2002) and Schwandt (1994), interpretivism was the best approach to glean understanding, and make meaning from the perspective of the participants and their experiences as situation-specific actors. This was enhanced by focusing the research site and responding to academics' advice that promised rich sustainability knowledge, recommendations included, an individual's experiences of, reactions to and values concerning sustainability (Buckley, 2012), SMEs, and individual response (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006) and SMEs (Deucher, 2012). This proved sound advice, as the artisans and their hospitality SMEs offered a micro-scale, and information-rich research site beyond expectation. The four interconnected themes, and the corresponding narrative describing the journey sequence in the findings, illustrates the applicability and success of the methodology. As such, interpretivism and the mix of qualitative methods used fitted the research aim and SME knowledge quest.

## **6.3 Implications, Recommendations and Opportunities**

The themes discussed in the findings identified some interesting ideas and patterns. The Golden Circle perspective was used to illustrate the significance of the artisans' sustainability consciousness and as a response to recent scholars' recommendations (i.e. that little was known about an SME's starting point, that is, where in the life cycle of a business does sustainability start? Font *et al.*, 2016; the value that exists when hospitality actors creatively find solutions, overcome challenges and, take opportunities that produce pro-sustainability outcomes outside in-the-box thinking, Lim, 2016). Together, the findings and the Golden Circle perspective stimulated the implications, recommendations, and opportunities.

### **6.3.1 Hospitality Industry**

The snapshot of the lived experiences of the hospitality participants in this research as impacted stakeholders revealed some interesting insights that have implications and opportunities for the industry. This perspective showed there is much that can be done to ease the journey toward sustainable business and make it more attractive and attainable for others. The status quo of the hospitality industry was challenged by the subgroup of hospitality practitioners in this study, particularly the industry's responsibility towards staff and sustainability action. It is hoped the industry recognises that within its ranks there are notable examples of successful sustainable business operations, especially among artisans. It is recommended that hospitality industry representatives reduce their large-hotel focus and include, acknowledge and report more on the oft-disregarded SME segment of the industry. Importantly, this is an opportunity for the industry to celebrate the SME networks of like-minded sustainable thinkers, and others of their type identified in this study, and broadcast their sustainable operational achievements as industry pioneers. It is hoped that this will create greater equilibrium among the hospitality industry faction that will eventually be reflected in the literature and knowledge.

### **6.3.2 Education Providers**

Education providers can benefit from the findings in this research, as translating theory into practice was identified in the literature as problematic (Buckley, 2012). The

findings were consistent with this view and it seems much can be done to change this. It is recommended that education providers pursue mutually beneficial partnerships with hospitality SMEs operationalising sustainability, as these are the practical environments students will eventually contribute to, both in theory and in practice. Importantly, many of the SMEs in this study were actively initiating sustainable partnerships, and demonstrating they were eager to share information. Some had made their SME available to a range of interested educational providers already.

The collaboration, communication and knowledge-sharing illustrated in the findings in the *tribe of journey-makers* theme is testimony to the benefits of unity. Therefore, cohesion between theory-based and practical environments, and thence to improved understanding represents an opportunity for industry educators, operators, students and, ultimately, product and service outcomes.

### **6.3.3 Regulatory Bodies**

It is recommended that regulatory bodies consider more closely the artisans' positive contributions toward shaping a country's social and economic history (examples, British Library Board, 1841; Hansen, 2009; Kristofferson, 2007; Lucie-Smith, 1981; Rock, 1998) and legislate to facilitate their activity. This recommendation derives from the findings, as the artisans recounted the problems they experienced as a result of their artisanal practices.

Regulatory bodies must understand that operating with a sustainable consciousness incurs substantially more costs than conventional businesses in terms of compliance. Generally, while operators did not expect reduced fees because of their business model, they did expect the compliance they paid for to deliver a higher standard than what was offered. It is important to acknowledge that regulation costs in an already difficult business model environment are creating frustration and self-auditing amongst networks. Regulatory bodies may do well to consider they are pricing and alienating themselves out of an innovative, progressive artisanal movement and industry segment that contributes to national identity and food tourism.

#### 6.3.4 Opportunities for Future Research

The significance of the artisans' sustainability consciousness ('why') revealed in the findings and discussed using the Golden Circle perspective presents a number of opportunities for future research

The sustainability consciousness was revealed as the fuel driving the sustainable business models discussed in this research. This finding demonstrates a reason for action that is in stark contrast to the heavily reported external pressure peculiar to hospitality, that is resource scarcity and costs (Bruns-Smith *et al.*, 2015; Deloitte, 2010; Jauhari & Verma, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Sharpley, 2000; Sloan *et al.*, 2013). It is acknowledged that the hospitality industry is under pressure to act in a manner that reflects its reliance on, and vulnerability to, the sustainability of the world's resources (Deale *et al.*, 2009; Melissen, 2013; Sharpley, 2000; Yepes, 2015). This threat is consistently reflected in the sustainability claims of industry institutions and large hotels. For example, the hospitality research summit entitled Finding Profit in 'Being Green' (Withiam, 2011) echoes the literature and probable industry activators, (i.e. profit as the reason for action). Similarly, large-hotel chains' sustainability claims pose a contradiction according to Jones *et al.* (2016) as they pursue economic growth which, by nature, impacts environmental resources.

As such, these external pressures continue to influence research agendas; therefore, this starting point dominates knowledge output and influences and shapes reactions such as stakeholder responses, sustainability models and so forth. Most significantly, in doing so, it does not consider the starting points of an important industry segment. This is an opportunity and, as such, it is recommended that the SME cluster be considered as an important knowledge site for research. This supports recommendation sources (e.g. Deucher, 2012; Lawrence *et al.*, 2006) that helped shape this research. It is hoped these biases – considered within the findings – and their significance help future researchers recognise the value and opportunity SMEs represent in the sustainability discussion. As such, researchers who explore the influence of the literature, with its large-hotel bias, has on shaping, for example, stakeholder responses, or sustainability operational models, may reveal knowledge currently not considered.

The discovery of a sustainability consciousness has exposed a critical stage at the start of the sustainability timeline. This opportunity is encouraging, and was recently identified by Font *et al.* (2016) as an important point on a business's or individual's timeline that hospitality researchers in sustainability have overlooked. The findings show the influence of the artisans' sustainability consciousness and how this shaped the actions and authentic outcomes on a hospitality sustainability journey. Understanding 'why' the artisans in this research chose a sustainable business model and the impact this potent starting point had on the journey was significant. It may be explored further using alternative research approaches or used as a foundation to measure impacts of a research intervention.

Significantly, the Golden Circle perspective identified the importance of 'why' as a starting point towards success. It is hoped this study has contributed a credible base of knowledge to an area that has only recently been identified as a gap by Font *et al.* (2016), and that this stimulates more interest. Research that explores other influential factors, like the significance of the sustainability consciousness revealed in the *backstory* theme, and the journey starting point discussed using the Golden Circle perspective (see Chapter 5), would contribute valuable knowledge discoveries that expand on this research.

Another area of significance for researchers is the recognition that artisans' ideals, innovations, and status-quo-disruptive behaviours are just as identifiable now as their historic namesake suggests. Therefore, including artisans in the research participation criteria offers a previously ignored and undervalued typology to leverage new understanding. Research that contrasts sustainable initiatives and outcomes between artisan-driven SMEs and non-artisan SMEs may generate knowledge that articulates an artisan's values beyond the potential demonstrated in this study.

It is hoped the sustainability consciousness identified in the *backstory* theme demonstrates to researchers that the considerations informing and shaping this research (i.e. how do they do it? what are the operational outcomes?) manifested into a significantly more insightful understanding (i.e. why? – the artisans' sustainability consciousness), because the phenomenon was explored where it existed and had

impact. This is important because it illustrates the value of an interpretive paradigm, qualitative methodologies and an emic perspective. Qualitative methodologies using smaller samples were recently recommended by academics such as Font *et al.* (2016) and Jones *et al.* (2016) as a means of revealing sustainability insights in hospitality. In support, other academics (e.g. Kim *et al.* 2017; Lynch, 2005; Myung *et al.*, 2012) identified that qualitative research was under-represented in hospitality literature. This may encourage hospitality researchers to use the less favoured qualitative approach currently lacking in the hospitality literature.

## **6.4 In Conclusion**

This study sought to find practical solutions for hospitality operators considering the less travelled road of sustainability. The ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions are where this research started and consequently the ‘how’- and ‘what’-type questions were transferred into the research and framed the content of the literature review and the interview question guidelines. Yet ‘why’ potentially became the most interesting finding and one that was not considered relevant until the research process allowed the participants’ voice to make it so. ‘Why’ became the potent prerequisite to ‘how’ and was revealed as the most important driver on the journey towards sustainability.

This is important for operators because the findings clearly illustrate the level of resilience and determination needed to embark on *a road less travelled* and create, operate, and maintain a successful and sustainable hospitality SME. Most significantly however, it suggests to operators that it may not be enough to know ‘how’ to operationalise sustainability. This study’s findings have shown that a sustainable model demands so much more from an operator than the conventional equivalent. It must be recognised that it may not even be enough if the operator has an entrepreneurial mindset. It is advisable that the operators reflect on ‘why’ they want to pursue a sustainable business model. The Golden Circle discussion gives credibility to this concept, and the importance of an authentic sustainability consciousness as a more favourable starting point to orientate the journey and realise success.

Thinking outside the box was a concept introduced at the beginning of this thesis as the ability to recognise, create and stimulate new ways of thinking in pursuit of novel,

practical and feasible solutions towards sustainability in hospitality. In conclusion, this research demonstrates how integral a pathway is, what it effects, and how it can determine outcomes. The Golden Circle provided insight into the significance of why the pathway starts, how it tracks, and what outcomes are realised. Congruently, this research identified where the artisans' sustainable SME business model pathway started, the importance of that starting point, and the positive impact it had on the outcomes. It is hoped that the Golden Circle perspective shows how significant the hospitality artisan may be in progressing sustainability in the industry. To take this idea further, the artisans' journey was aligned to the stories of forward-thinking leaders widely recognised for creating positive change. Perhaps, given their history, the artisan may be hospitality's iconic change-maker who champions sustainability and leads the industry by example. Out of respect, an artisan has the last words:

It isn't going to come without people pushing it so, you know, advocate for it. Be part of the change. You know, stand up for the things that you believe in (Pat).

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# Appendix A: Question Guide

## Question Guide

### How Do You Do It?

- ☐ How do you include sustainability initiatives on a day-to-day basis? Can you give examples please?
- ☐ What are the pros/cons of employing these initiatives? (does it make it easier/harder)
- ☐ Education - what sustainability knowledge/practices do industry entrants and/or new staff offer your business
- ☐ Regulatory Bodies (including sustainability agencies)– where does this fit, do they help/ hinder? Explain?
- ☐ Are you in any network or groups?
- ☐ If we imagine the educators, regulatory bodies and network groups were sitting here with us now. As a practitioner endeavouring to apply sustainable practices to your business–
  - What would you ask them for?
  - How could they aid your journey better?
- ☐ Why did you choose to go down the ‘sustainable’ path?
- ☐ Lets’ talk about the sustainable road. What does the future look like within your business model?
- ☐ Can you reflect on what drove you to build/buy this business model mix (hospitality, sustainability and artisan), explain?
- ☐ I’m really keen to hear about the artisan element of your business.
  - What does the word ‘artisan’ mean to you?
  - What sort of initiatives and values sit behind including an artisan line in your business?
- ☐ Considering what we have spoken about, can you just tell me a cluster of words that describe what you are doing and what ‘type’ you have to be to do it please?
- ☐ What advice would you give to hospitality operators considering a business model like yours?

## Appendix B: Field Notes

+ historical documents. perhaps  
not so alive in modernity. disappointed reality.  
K interview was from inception to  
actual smooth, mutual, eager +  
passionate. K on numerous boards +  
advocacy agencies, <sup>sustaining</sup> deeply  
embedded in his DNA, + ~~the~~ desire to  
embed in his staff. induction + ~~the~~  
desire to share, advocate to others +  
include downstream + upstream stakeholders  
+ bridge gaps between producers +  
consumers.

not consider above + added questions to PB  
+ took out one too - "I believe there  
is a link . . . . ." = REMOVED as  
too leading.

~~lifestyle~~  
~~then.~~ - CC (no longer CC)  
② x24 ph call x1 (M)  
② me 25/march - may not have Stewardship  
April - spoke LP as potential participants  
lean on ground. If active in sus'  
we can include albeit stewardship/Acc  
Skype Interview. Magic, really passionate,  
amazing journey, Gardens in background.  
R spoke to person during interview + I  
noticed a very casual, engaging + genuine  
interaction. R spoke highly of others - this  
was evident + observed between lines -

Timun initially was struck by place, loads of sus' relevant info enviro' mainly - Informative, yet professional, slightly commercial enviro - yet older chaps working, later found out they were volunteers. A real mix. Felt deflated at first as participant ~~was~~ appeared business & money focused. Felt more like the mandate was to achieve accreditation to get a tick off. Very busy place, well oiled machine, professional, less casual - more commercial feel. Felt bigger, contrasting to other real it more staged.

nce  
//)

- tipping point
- self change
- movers/shakers
- visionary
- reliability of product
- POSITIVE VALUE
- artisan (1st time he used word that was gold)
- what we do, why don't NZ Govt do?  
eg Rubobish
- one size for all - regulatory

↑  
As it was skype I could write without appearing rude - I missed being in THEIR environment - there are more opportunities to feel their daily lives in Real environments.

Again values were prevalent in between lines, I let it roll out to see where it went.

Bit Radical with organics  
Off Cuff interview, had 10 mins to get there, 5 mins to get back  
OK - managed to justify the change  
great, made time I was beginning to feel comfortable + casual with interview. She really just ~~sped~~ sped out info, but very passionate about organics, & found it bit hard to ren in but let go too as bits of info are often found in participant sharing. I learned a lot from this lady. building talk + being there to see it was a bonus. Beneficial to go to their place of work - simplicity was a stand out observation. This leads me to now ask about ~~the~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ -  
Transcript ~~not~~ offered many pockets of gold in her off-topic talking, & Naming others, sharing social conscious examples - Told me that sitting silently + allowing off-topic was a viable consideration - Glad I controlled myself - Yay me!

SEN (1)  
②. the asking interview - followup  
Sent Forms ✓  
Consent Form done just stick boxes.  
2pm Wed 13 APRIL APT 11

~~P. [redacted] free s&N.~~  
24/3 ~~[redacted]~~

~~[Large scribbled-out signature]~~

~~wrote up after no response after India~~  
~~said they can't start~~

~~[redacted]~~ • Continued

Very remote location, ~~the~~ She just returned from walk with friend, friend ~~was~~ there + gave us coffee but helped herself but not work there = Very Casual + Easy feel. Woody enviro, Earthy. Husband in + out building stuff. Cabbage tree a spectacular sight - Strangely I never liked them before. She casual, easy, ~~is~~ physically - slight air of "stand offish" - "I tried hard to put her at ease - Just a feeling. Trees lovely leafy, almost hidden - Not Big Bold, - quiet achiever.

~~Observation~~ - brought kids in, ~~she~~ Super busy body, impressed she gave me time considering her situation, interactive with staff during - very helpful + multi-tasker, compassionate - reacted + set up another interview for me →

~~Observation~~ OBSERVATIONS.  
④  
entrenched in DNA, values  
Remade, Pioneer, born of  
community - Family, product of  
environment -  
~~Observation~~ - No Cert ⑤  
No go. - bugged this is a good one.  
Rung ~~at~~ while leaving ~~at~~ - + he was  
keen as ~~is~~ had recommended to me but  
no cert' so fell outside criteria.  
Really hard to keep on track. Refused  
lightly fanatical, yet soooo passionate  
invited me into home - very earthy/  
place + people. Had time to walk round  
riders, see river + eels - Like Willy Wonka's  
nature land - Keen to expand beyond central  
ones but found his history a ~~big~~ relevant  
Gled me a beer, engaged wife - very  
friendly - lovely warm face. - Surroundings all  
conclusion help (2006 Thorne)  
ited.

# Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

10 April 2015

page 1 of 2

## Participant Information Sheet



### Date Information Sheet Produced:

11<sup>th</sup> May, 2015

### Project Title

Exploring How Sustainability Accredited Hospitality Businesses Practice and Include Sustainable Initiatives in their Establishments

### An Invitation

My name is Maree Stansfield, I am a student doing my Master Thesis at AUT's School of Hospitality and Tourism. I am interested in sustainability, artisan products and hospitality and I am conducting a study involving small-medium hospitality businesses that manufacture/use artisan lines and employ sustainable practices in their establishments. If you would like to participate in this study I will be interested in hearing of your experiences around these issues. Critically, I understand that the move to sustainability is still pioneering and a gradual initiative and it is in this spirit that my research will be conducted.

Participation in this study is voluntary and if you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection without any adverse consequences.

### What is the purpose of this research?

I hope to find common themes that detail sustainable practice initiatives, benefits and impairments. I am interested in understanding the future visions of participants towards sustainability. I believe that participants experiences will contribute to the existing body of knowledge, a practice based understanding, knowledge sharing and discipline utility.

### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I am looking for owners/general managers of small-medium hospitality enterprises that manufacture or use artisan products and are accredited and/or recognised for their sustainable practices in their daily operations. I have approached sustainable advocacy agencies, used the web and asked colleagues to assist me in locating potential participants that fit the criteria. As you have contacted me, you must have heard about the study from someone and contacted me for more information.

### What will happen in this research?

If you agree to participate we will agree on a place to meet so I can interview you. I am very happy to come and meet with you at your place of work. I will go through this information sheet with you to see if you have any questions, then ask you to sign a consent form allowing me to interview you. I will be interested to hear what motivates you to include sustainable practices into the daily operations of your establishment, what this actually looks like in practice and investigate any benefits and/or impairments. I will spend some time observing this in practice and perhaps return to clarify some items and perhaps get your input on what other participants have shared. I will make a digital recording of the interview, and take notes. If you request it, afterwards I will send you the notes or a transcript of the interview, in case you want to change anything. You can withdraw from the study and withdraw your data up until I have finished the interviews.

### What are the discomforts and risks?

Your privacy and that of your business will be treated as paramount, and in total confidence. As mentioned above the move to sustainability is pioneering and a gradual process and it is in that spirit that my research will be conducted.

### How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

We can take a break at any time, you can decline to answer my questions, or you can pull out of the study altogether and your recording and notes relating to your interview will be destroyed.

This version was last edited on 23 April 2013

Noting that you tell me will be published in any way that may identify you. If you wish, you can see the final report before going to publication, in case you want to change anything that you feel may identify you.

**What are the benefits?**

I hope to add to the currently scant body of knowledge around this subject. I believe the practical knowledge themed together in this research may genuinely assist hospitality practitioners with their move towards sustainability. This research may help sustainability advocacy agencies tailor their services to their hospitality clients, alongside highlighting any benefits and impairments sustainability in practice may create. I hope to investigate any correlation between artisan products and sustainability. I also expect to publish my findings in academic journals to aid in discipline utility.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Your name and the information that may identify you will be confidential to me and not shared with anyone else. You will have the opportunity to read my work prior to submission to ensure your anonymity and that of your business.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The interview will take around 45-60 minutes and it may take you a further 15 minutes if you wish to check your interview notes afterwards. There is a likelihood that I will contact you again during my research to clarify information and/or ask for your input on new subject matter that arises throughout my visits to other participants.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You have two weeks to consider this invitation.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Please respond to this email and let me know you are happy to be interviewed so we can arrange a time and place to suit you. I will send you a consent form to sign before we start the interview.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

If you would like the results of the study, you can note this on your consent form, and I will email you the completed paper when it is published.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Jill Poulston, [jill.poulston@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jill.poulston@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 8468.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

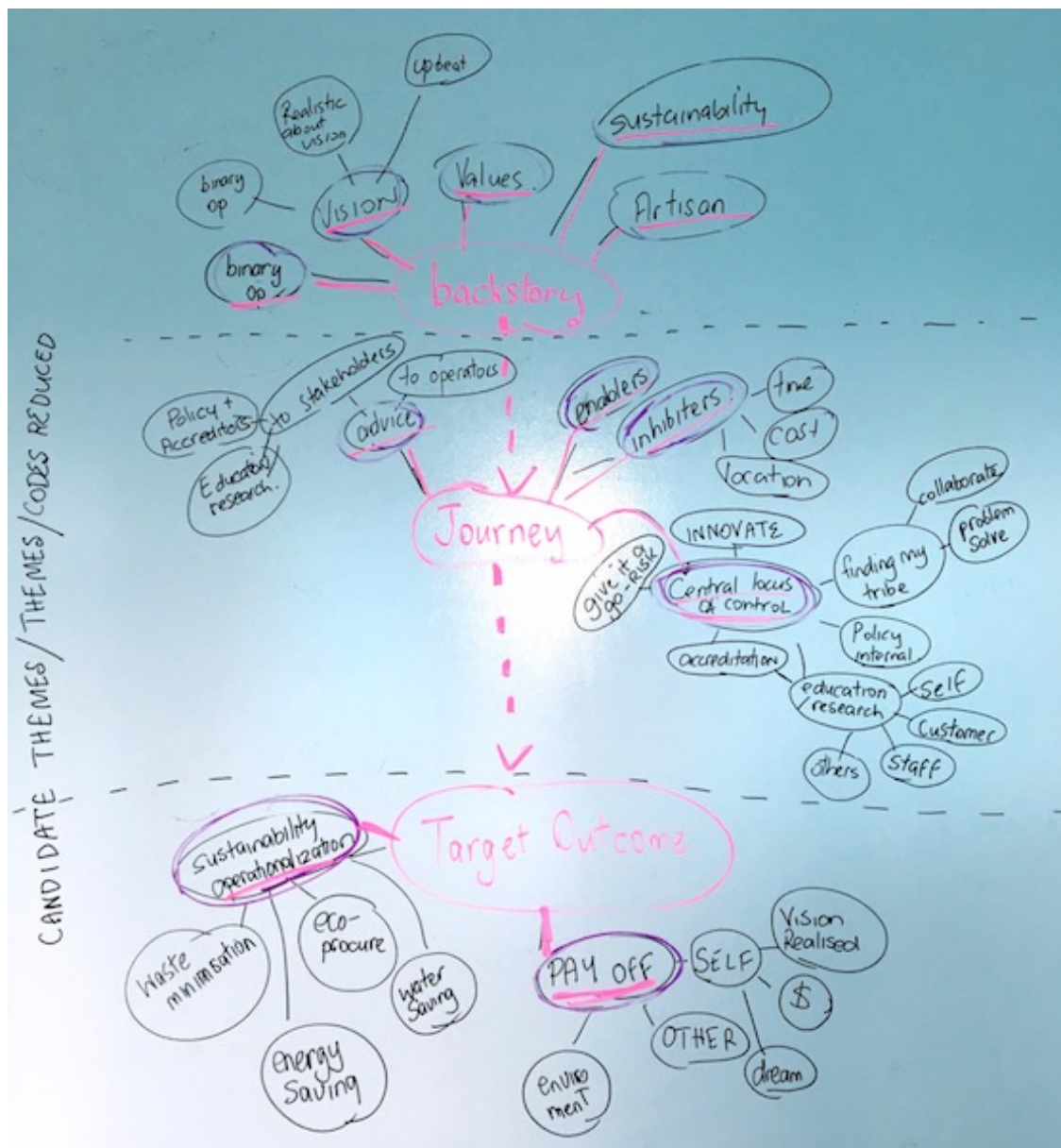
Ree Stansfield, 0274796037

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

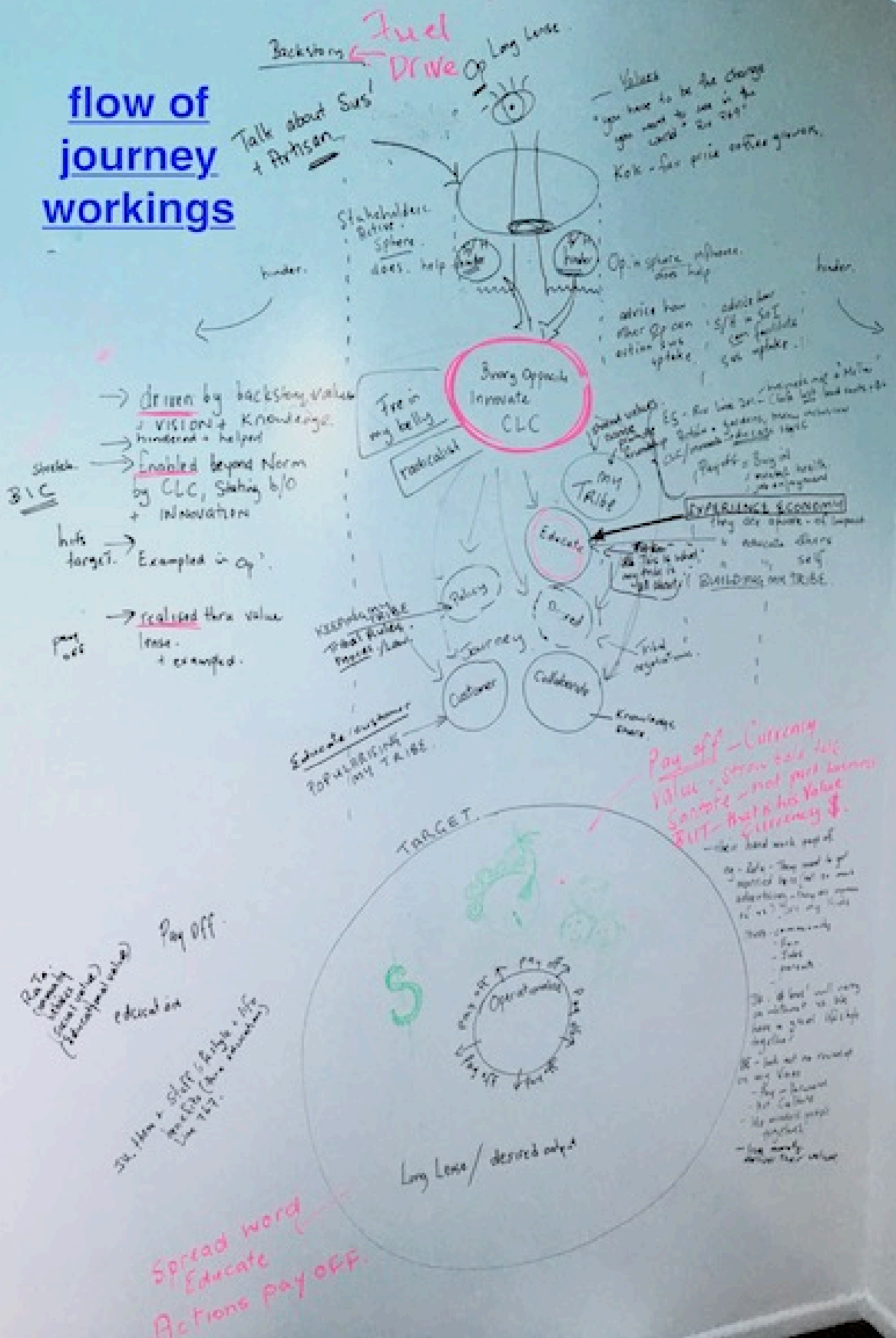
Dr Jill Poulston, [jill.poulston@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jill.poulston@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext 8468.

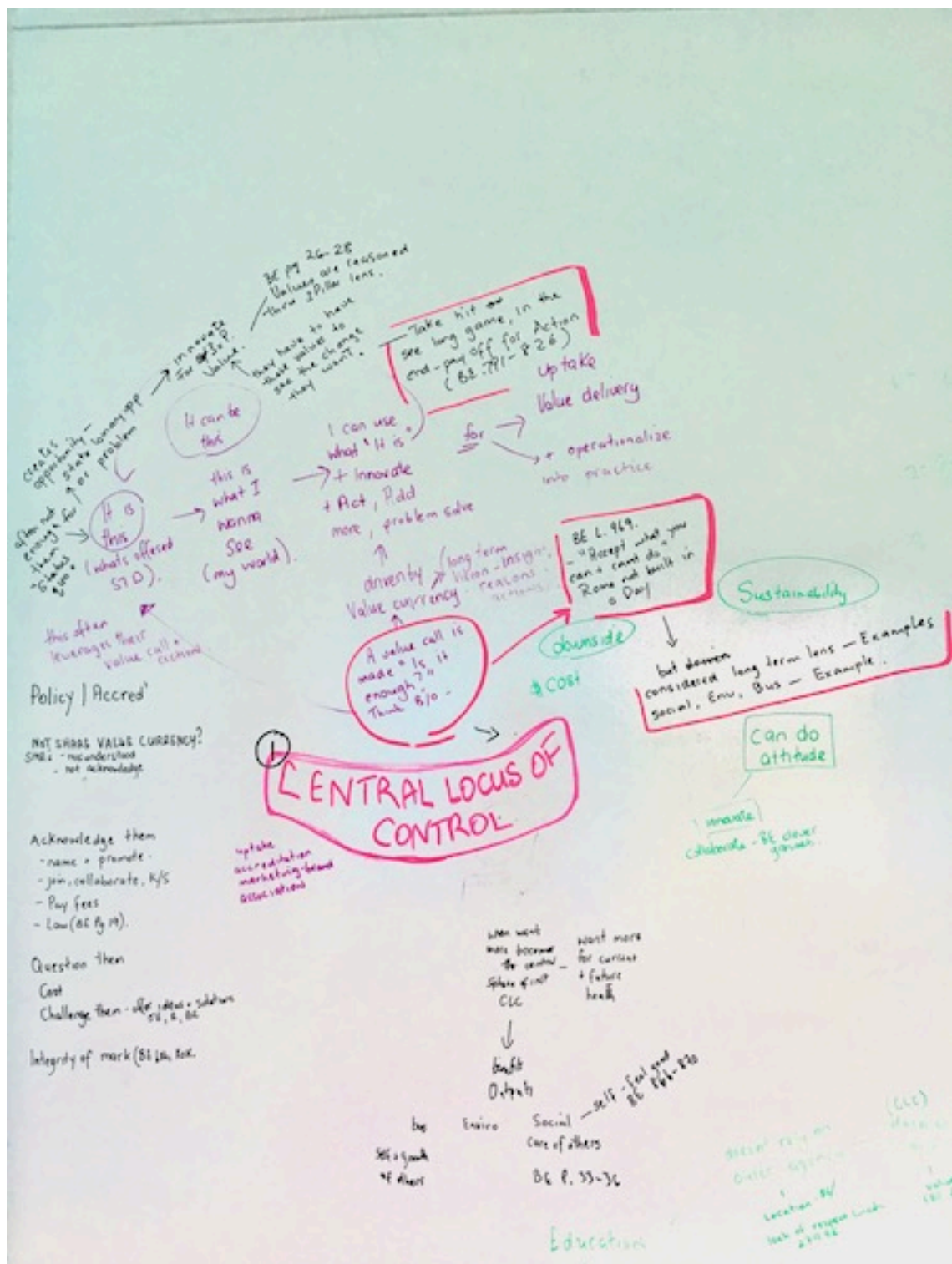
Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date final ethics approval was granted, AUTEK Reference number type this reference number.

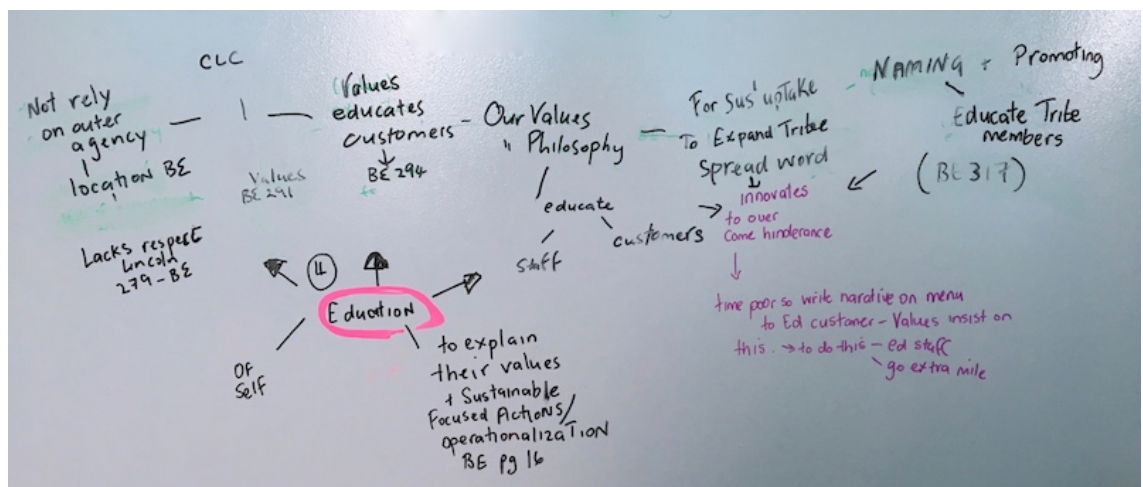
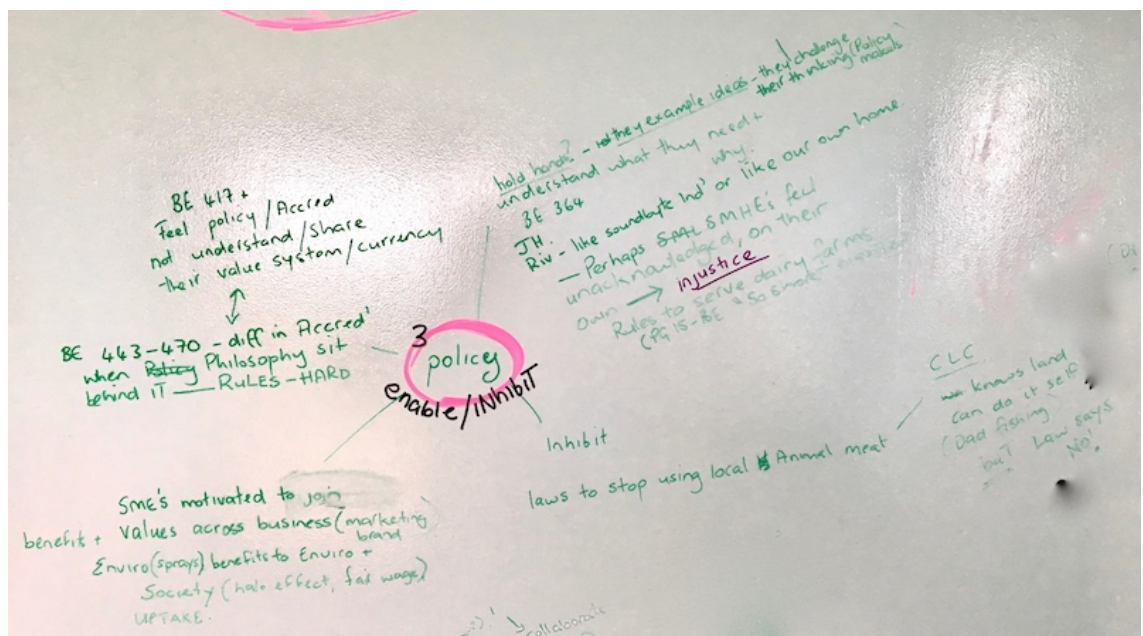
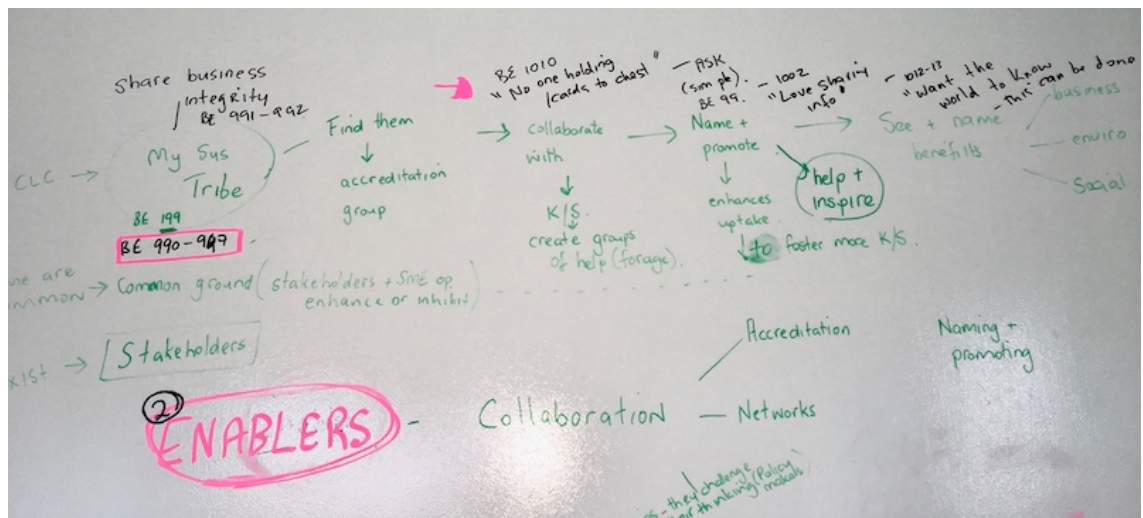
## Appendix D: Code Working Photos



## flow of journey workings







⑤ Sustainability focused  
Artsan Hospo' SME Operators

they want more, must be  
Value/Vision FIT -

"be the  
World You  
want to  
see"  
Riv

"It's Who we  
Are" MI

DRIVEN  
BY

VALUES,  
VISION, BACKSTORY

"MAN TAKES  
TOO MUCH"  
IH.

"It's  
our  
responsibility"  
KOK

"It's something I've  
always believed  
in" Lalo

"HALO  
EFFECT"  
to  
"bring back  
what's gone  
in city"  
RAT

"SIMPLE +  
REAL"  
"The world will  
eventually  
catch up"  
BE.

When Outer "sphere of influence"  
Fails, their CLC Kicks in +  
they innovate to realize their  
vision + meet values

PAY OFF.

## Appendix E: Ethics Approval



AUTEC  
SECRETARIAT

9 June 2015

Jill Poulston  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Jill

Ethics Application: **15/204 Exploring how sustainability accredited hospitality businesses practice and include sustainable initiatives in their establishments.**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved for three years until 6 June 2018.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 6 June 2018;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 6 June 2018 or on completion of the project;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor'.

Kate O'Connor  
Executive Secretary  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Maree Stansfield [reewombles@hotmail.com](mailto:reewombles@hotmail.com)

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

WA505D Level 5 WA Building City Campus

Private Bag 92006 Auckland 1142 Ph: +64-9-921-9999 ext 8316 email [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)